

HOW DOES ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH AFFECT THE HOTEL INDUSTRY?

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Abstract

There exists research on electronic word-of-mouth and the different perspectives around it. This includes motives for engaging in electronic word-of-mouth, how to manage it, opportunities and challenges with it. However, there is little research on how electronic word-of-mouth affect the hotel industry. This study is primarily focused on electronic word-of-mouth from a customer's point of view. Through the survey created for this thesis, I made questions to the respondents examining their relationship to online reviews, how they are getting affected, what they think about the trustworthiness of an online review, how often they stay at a hotel within a year, their habits before and after a purchase of a trip, and more. I have used the information from the literature review and method in order to answer the hypotheses in this study.

Keywords: Electronic word-of-mouth, word-of-mouth

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1.Introduction

1.1. Research question

As a tourist, I always search for information about the destination I want to visit and the hotels nearby. I use both social media and websites like for instant TripAdvisor to gain information about people's experiences. Reviews online are important for me when I make the choice of my stay. If the hotel has negative reviews or a low score, I tend to lose interest. On the other side, if people are satisfied with their experience and have given the hotel good reviews, I get positively influenced.

Since I have an interest in hotels and want to start my job career in the hotel industry, it was naturally for me to include it in my thesis. I have therefore decided to do research on electronic word-of-mouth and how it is affecting the hotel industry. My research question for this study is "How does electronic word-of-mouth affect the hotel industry?".

1.2. Background

Word-of-mouth is a part of people's daily life, and everybody is engaged in it, whether they are conscious about it or not. It can be through talking to friends about a product or sharing experiences about a service with strangers (Solomon, Bamossy & Askegaard, 1999, p. 281).

Because of the development in technology, Web 2.0 has made it possible for people to search for any information they want, interact with people from all over the world, and share exactly what

they want with whom they want. This is called electronic word-of-mouth (Dellarocas, 2003, p. 1407). Electronic word-of-mouth have affected how travellers gain information and their planning process (Kim, Lehto & Morrison, 2007, p. 223). Many people think it can be difficult to purchase a tourism product, because it is hard to appraise the quality of it, prior to the experience (Kim et al., 2007, p. 223). In order for travellers to reduce some of the uncertainty, they do research online to seek information made by others. An example on a website where people can find information is TripAdvisor, which is a platform where reviews related to the hospitality- and tourism industry get published and shared. TripAdvisor has over 661 million reviews on its website from all over the world (TripAdvisor, 2019).

1.3. Research

There are several studies on electronic word-of-mouth and perspectives around it. Litvin, Goldsmith and Pan (2008) did a study about electronic word-of-mouth in hospitality and tourism management. This article describes and explains word-of-mouth and electronic word-of-mouth. Smith and Vogt (1995) did a study on the effects of integrated advertising and negative word-of-mouth communication on message processing and response. Dellarocas (2003) did research on the digitalization of word-of-mouth where it was focus on promise and challenges of online feedback mechanism. The article explores the collaborative economic and how it implicates in the systems of tourism industrial. Minazzi (2015) did a study about social media marketing within the tourism and hospitality industry. In her book, she wrote among other things how to manage electronic word-of-mouth. Back in 1999, Solomon, Bamossy and Askegaard wrote a book about consumer behaviour through a European perspective. This book is written to

European students, where they have presents issues, illustrates examples, data and research concerning European consumer markets and behaviours.

Hawkins, Best and Coney (1998) have published a book called “Consumer behavior: building marketing strategy”. This book is written for students in order to understand markets and to teach them how to develop strategies. Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh and Gremler published an article in 2004 that is about electronic word-of-mouth via consumer-opinion platforms. It explains the motivations consumers have for engaging in electronic word-of-mouth. Kim, Lehto and Morrison (2007) have written an article about gender differences in online travel information search, where they focus on implications for marketing communications online.

Even though there already exist studies on electronic word-of-mouth, there are little research on how it is affecting the hotel industry. Because of collaborative economy, there have occurred new opportunities for customers, that seems to challenge the hotel industry (Dredge & Gyimóthy, 2015, p. 294). AirBnB is an example on collaborative economy. This is a service where people can rent out their home to others, which can be a cheaper alternative for customers than buying a traditional stay at a hotel (AirBnB, 2019). The internet has made it possible for people to interact with others from all over the world. Through travelling-websites as TripAdvisor, people get the opportunity to post reviews and read review made by others (TripAdvisor, 2019).

1.4. Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to find out how hotels gets affected by electronic word-of-mouth. In order to answer this research question, I have been studying previous research on the phenomena electronic word-of-mouth. The survey I have applied in my research has been focused on the respondent's relationship to hotels. How often they stay at hotels, their purpose, how they seek information, and how their attitude gets affected by reviews online. It is important to understand what motivate and inspires people to write a review. Also, I think it is important to find out which people who get mostly affected by the information they find online through reviews or comments on social media. By using previous findings and information from the articles and books in the literature review, the results from the survey and the analysis, the research question should be answered.

2. Literature review

2.1. Word-of-Mouth

Much of the information we get about the world, except of the formal means of communication, we get through informal conversations with individuals. We are all engaging in word-of-mouth communications in our daily life. If you are complimenting a person about a piece of clothing and ask about which store the person got it from, you are contributing to word-of-mouth. This also applies if you talk about a restaurant or a café with other people, and if you recommend it or not (Solomon et al., 1999, p. 281).

Word-of-mouth have been ranked as one of the most important information sources, alongside interpersonal influence, when it comes to a consumer decision-making process of a purchase. Since most of the products in the hospitality and tourism industry are intangible, word-of-mouth

are incredibly important. This is because of the difficulty of evaluating the product before the experience (Litvin et al., 2008, p. 458). The meaning of word-of-mouth are linked to that people are searching for different consumables, and that the emotional values have a big meaning when it comes to an experience (Mossberg, 2012, p. 146).

Hawkins et al. (1998, p. 238) defined word-of-mouth communication as individuals sharing information with others. This type of communication can have critical influence on both consumers decision-making and businesses success (Hawkins et al., 1998, p. 238). People often seek information about a product or a service from its own family and friends. This will most likely affect our attitude towards the product or the service and will influence us towards or away from it. Even though word-of-mouth has been known as a strong influential resource of sharing information, this type of communication is only effective in limited social contact boundaries (Jalilvand, Esfahani & Samiei, 2011, p. 42).

If we get information from an acquaintance or we are directly talking with the information source, we perceive the information as more reliable and trustworthy than the information shared through formal channels. In addition, the information is more likely to not be advertising for the product or the service. The recommendations you receive by directly talking to a person who is not promoting goods are often backed up by social pressure (Arndt, 1967, pp. 291-295). The decline in institutions believability according to people are another important factor of word-of-mouth. It has been problematical for companies to use traditional endorsers for its products or services. One of the reasons are that consumers perceive celebrities as unreliable and not trustworthy sources. Another reason is that people have become more cynical about commercial

communication, and they are more critical to which recommendation and informational sources they believe in. Therefore, many people have turned to friends and family to get recommendations and advices. In some situations, people get more influenced by other's opinions than their own (Solomon et al., 1999, p. 281).

Word-of-mouth campaigns most often happens spontaneously. It is because a product starts to develop a regional or a subcultural following. In some cases, a company intentionally creates a "buzz" (Solomon et al., 1999, p. 282). There are many different factors that contributes to motivating conversations related to products. If you have an interest in a product or an activity, you might like to talk about it with others. A person with a lot of knowledge about a product might put it into conversations to impress others. Some people might turn a conversation into a discussion because of a genuine concern for the other person. This is because we human tend to make sure that people we care about buy those products that are the best for them, and that they are not wasting their money on something else. Another motivation is to reduce the uncertainty about a product or a service. This can easily be done by making conversations with others, because a person can generate several arguments that are supportive, and it becomes easier to make a decision because of the information given by others (Engel, Kegerreis, & Blackwell, 1969, pp. 15-19).

Word-of-mouth is a very efficient and powerful type of communication when the product category is unfamiliar for the consumer. This is especially normal in cases of new products, for example pills that makes your hair stronger. It is also expected that word-of-mouth is efficient in situations of purchasing a technological product (Solomon et al., 1999, p. 282).

Many people have a high interest in sharing their own experiences with others. This especially applies if the experience has been something extra or unique that can catch attention from the audience (Solomon et al., 1999, cited in Mossberg, 2012, p. 146). Solomon (1999, cited in Mossberg, 2012, p. 146) state that those people that have a strong engagement usually are those people that controls conversations towards their interests.

Word-of-mouth is of non-commercial nature, and that is the reason why people are not as sceptical to it as activities arranged by companies in order to promote themselves. Many people can be persuaded to buy a service by only hearing one recommendation (Herr, Kardes & Kim, 1991, p. 456).

It is often what we call opinion leaders, that normally starts the spread of word-of-mouth. According to Solomon et al. (1999, pp. 289-290) there are two types of opinion leaders, professional and consumer opinion leaders. Professional opinion leaders are scientists and doctors, while consumer opinion leaders are normal consumers (Solomon et al., 1999, pp. 289-290). One of the reasons why opinion leaders are effective to spread word-of-mouth are because people trust information they get from others at the same age, with similar interests and equivalent socioeconomic background. Often when people search for information they talk to others with more knowledge and experience than themselves (Weimann, 1994, cited in Mossberg, 2012, p. 147). For companies it is interesting to identify which persons that are the most influential and are affecting the shopping pattern of consumers (Solomon et al., 1999, p. 289).

Word-of-mouth can have both negative and positive impact on products and services. It can be a deal breaker for making success for a company or break it. Negative word-of-mouth is more powerful than positive (Solomon et al., 1999, p. 289). People are focusing more on negative information about products or services than the positive information, and they share it with others (Lutz, 1975, pp. 49-59). It has also been shown that a company's credibility and trustworthiness has reduced because of negative word-of-mouth, and it influence consumers' attitudes about the product or service (Smith & Vogt, 1995, pp. 133-151).

2.2. Web 2.0

Web 2.0 is a term that refers to the fact that the functionality of the web that has increased dramatically. The users of Internet have become more experienced along with the fact that the online tools have developed to be more challenging and complex than they were previously. It was Sir Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the World Wide Web, that drove the development of technology towards Web 2.0 (Knights, 2007, p. 30). The innovation of Web 2.0 has made the communication more dynamic and collaborative, and made it easier to interact and exchange knowledge compared to earlier. The Web technology has changed how people are getting access to online content. Now people have the opportunity to sign up to content that they are interested in, and companies can send out emails or texts to their customers. These tools have the ability to personalise online content, which is a differentiator for Web 2.0 technology like Google or social

network community like Facebook. Most companies and organisations are aware of the marketing power of communication driven by Web 2.0 (Knights, 2007, p. 31).

Companies take advantage of Web 2.0 by using it for getting feedback about new products, reduce the development time of products, and targeting marketing resources. For a company to targeting influential users online can help them to control their image and the influence publicity (Knights, 2007, p. 34).

2.3. Electronic Word-of-Mouth

Due to the extensive development of the Internet, it has not only made it possible for companies to get in contact with their customers or new potential customers, but it has also made it possible for individuals to share their knowledge and experience with others worldwide. This gives companies a great opportunity to share information about goods or services for a low cost (Dellarocas, 2003, p. 1407). There are many channels online where electronic word-of-mouth occurs, including blogs and virtual communities, website, newsgroup, chatrooms, emails, and instant messaging (Litvin et al., 2008, p. 462). People often share their thoughts and experiences through writing reviews on different platform with a large scale of people, and some share their knowledge and experiences by making a written post or a picture post on social media as Facebook or Instagram (Minazzi, 2015, p. 22).

Litvin et al. (2008, p. 461) have defined electronic word-of-mouth based on earlier definitions on word-of-mouth, as all informal communication online that are related to the usage of specific products and services, or their sellers. A few years earlier, Hennig-Thurau et. al (2004, p. 39)

defined electronic word-of-mouth as any statement, both positive and negative, that is available online for people made by customers about a company, product or a service.

As word-of-mouth have been digitalized, there have occurred both challenges and opportunities. For marketers there have been created some new possibilities, especially because of the costs for getting access and exchanging information is low (Dellarocas, 2003, p. 1410). The technology makes it easier to get control over communication, but because of the possibilities of being anonymous, challenges can occur. Anonymity can be misleading and for messages to be taken out of context (Dellarocas, 2003, p. 1410). An example on Online Feedback Mechanism is Citysearch. This goes under the category entertainment guide used to rate bars, club, hotels, restaurants and shops. Users get to rate different aspects from to 1-10, and the reader rate them as useful or not (Dellarocas, 2003, p. 1408). When it comes to the effectiveness of electronic word-of-mouth, scale is important. To get feedback from a customer about a product or a service can help to a better development in the future, but it depends on if the number of feedbacks are sufficient (Dellarocas, 2003, p. 1410).

2.4. Motives for engaging in electronic word-of-mouth

There are many different motives for people to engage in electronic word-of-mouth. Some might have had an unpleasant experience, and therefore are concerned for others. Another motive is that a person has a need of wanting to help a company (Henning-Thurau, 2004, p. 44). For example, a person might have had an amazing experience at a hotel and was extremely satisfied with the service from the staff at the hotel. Therefore, this person could have had a desire to pay the hotel back with a positive review, in order to let others know how good this hotel is. This

example can also be connected to the motive of express positive emotions. Post purchase advice seeking is another motive (Henning-Thurau, 2004, p. 44). Since it is a low cost for getting access to and share information about services and goods (Dellarocas, 2003, p. 1410), many are writing reviews where they share their experiences and knowledge. Some people might also ask questions on different online platforms, in order to get the information they feel like they need before making a purchase.

Another motive is to share a negative feeling or experience (Henning-Thurau, 2004, p. 44). After having an unsatisfying experience or an experience that did not fit the expectations, dissatisfied customer might feel like sharing the negativity with other. It can be to provide others from going through the same or in order to spread the word about the company. Some people might have an agenda to harm the reputation of the company. In a study made by Belarmino and Koh (2018, p. 2740), the results proved that people are mostly motivated to write a review about a hotel in order to reward them or punish them for their experience. Economic rewards are also a motivation for engaging in electronic word-of-mouth (Henning-Thurau, 2004, p. 44). Some companies might try to tempt people into writing reviews of them in order to get a discount or in order to participate in a competition. Self-enhancement is another motive (Henning-Thurau, 2004, p. 44). It can be in order to be recognized positively by others.

2.5. Helpful reviewers

The society and people's everyday lives have changed a lot due to the development within information technology. This also includes how travellers seeks information and how they plan their trips (Kim et al., 2007, p. 223). Information with quality has become a major research topic,

and it is important that tourism organizations are providing relevant information to its potential customers. This information should also be meaningful for the traveller (Kim et al., 2007, p. 223). Since it can be difficult to appraise quality of a tourism product prior the experience, the information that a company provide to its customers is important (Kim et al, 2007, p. 223). Travelers search for information prior to purchase in order to reduce the uncertainty and to gain confidence about the product.

An online platform for posting reviews related to the tourism industry is TripAdvisor. TripAdvisor is the largest travelling-website worldwide. They give travellers the opportunity to seek information about hotels, restaurants, activities and more, and read about other peoples' experiences or share their own experiences. There are over 661 million reviews on their website from around 7,7 million tourism companies. The website also compares prices from over 200 websites for booking hotel in order to help its users to get the lowest prices on the experiences. Their slogan is "Better knowledge. Better ordering. Better travels" (TripAdvisor, 2019).

The Internet makes it possible for potential travellers to interact with other travellers and share their experiences whenever they want. Because of this, it has become important to identify, retrieve and organize the online information connected to the decision making of a travel (Lee, Law & Murphy, 2011, p. 677). There are four attributes that are important when it comes to the reputable information source according to Lee et al. (2011, p. 678). These are expertise, physical attractiveness, gender, and information accuracy. The definition of expertise is the ability to successfully complete tasks related to products (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987, p. 411). Physical attractiveness is defined as the degree to how pleasing it is to observe the facial features of a

stimulus person (Patzner, 1987, p. 229). According to Lee et al. (2011, p. 678) communicators that are physically attractive are perceived as having a higher level of expertise and being more trustworthy. Even though it might be logical to think that the shorter interval it is between the experience and posting a review online is, the more accurate and credible will it be, might not be a correct statement. The review will probably be more favorable when the experience still is fresh in memory, while potential travelers might not be able to perform an accurate measurement of an objective (Lee et al., 2011, p. 679).

2.6. Dissatisfied Consumers

It is of importance that marketers create reasonable expectations through its promotion and maintain quality in order to satisfy the consumers expectations. Dissatisfied consumer often shares their dissatisfaction with their friends, which can affect the company in a negative way where they lose future sales (Richins, 1983, p. 68). The best way for a company to deal with a dissatisfied customer is to encourage the customer to takes directly contact with them, and hopefully not share their negative experience with others. The company have then the possibility to try to solve the problem, and the negative word-of-mouth communication will be minimized. Complaints are generally working in advantage for the customer, and research have showed in many cases that when the company resolved the costumer's problem, they get even more satisfied than customers that were satisfied in the first place (Spreng, Harrell, & Mackoy, 1995, p. 19).

For companies it is negative that many customers decide to not communicate with them about their dissatisfied experience. Feedback are an important element for companies in order to have a positive development where they can give a better satisfaction to their customers.

2.7. Positive and negative reviews

In Hawkins et al. (1998, p. 238) it is explained that consumers are more likely to share negative experiences in the marketplace. It is not always their own experiences that is shared, but also information they have gotten through others (Hawkins et al., 1998, p. 238). Studies have showed that negative reviews have more effect than positive reviews (Cui, Lui, & Guo, 2012, p. 39). Both positive and negative information in reviews make people evaluate the quality of the service or the product better (Fileri and McLeay, 2013, p. 53).

According to Cui et al. (2012, p. 45) are positive consumer reviews indicative of the quality and the reputation to a product. Negative reviews are giving people the impression that it is a lack of confidence in the product. This can affect negatively on the product sale (Cui et al., 2012, p. 45). It has been showed that people are paying more attention on negative reviews than positive reviews. Not only do they pay more attention to the negative reviews, but people are also putting more emphasis on them (Fiske, 1980, p. 891).

2.7.1. Effects of positive reviews

Earlier research has proved that reviews that are positive are improving people's attitude towards hotels (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009, p. 123). Sorensen and Rasmussen (2014, p. 3) have done a study on the impact that New York Times book reviews have on book sales. This study showed

that positive reviews had more positive influence on the sales of book than negative reviews had. They also had a surprisingly finding, which was that negative reviews had positive impact on book sales (Sorensen & Rasmussen, 2014, pp. 2-3). It is because readers get the information about the book's existence and its characteristics. Therefore, some readers might buy it even though the reviews were negative (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009, p. 124). According to Vermeulen and Seegers (2009, p. 126), the average probability for a consumer to consider purchasing a stay at a hotel gets improved by the exposure of an online review. The reason is because the consumers get more aware of the existence of the hotel, whether it is a positive or a negative review (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009, p.126). The effect of positive reviews increases a travellers' confidence, as well as reducing risk when purchasing a service (Gretzel, Yoo & Purifoy, 2007, cited in Fileri, p. 45).

2.7.2. Effects of negative reviews

Through a research made by Lee, Park and Han (2008, p. 349), they made four major findings about negative online reviews. One finding was that when there is an increase in negative online reviews, people's attitude become unfavourable. Another finding was that negative online consumer reviews with high-quality have more influence than negative reviews online with low-quality. The third finding was that there is an interaction between involvement and the quality of the negative consumer review online. This mean the degree of changing into a negative attitude towards a product after reading negative consumer reviews online with high-quality and low-quality Is greater for consumers with high involvement than consumers with low involvement. Their fourth and last finding from their research was that negative online consumer reviews with high-involvement have a greater conformity effect with high-quality negative online consumer

reviews than those with low-quality. In the case where there is low-involvement, the effect of conformity is not affected by the negative online consumer reviews' quality. When there is an increase in high-involvement negative online consumer reviews, the change in attitude is bigger under high-involvement than under low-involvement. The results from their research showed that because of online consumer reviews recommendation role, the proportion of negative consumer reviews online is possible a central cue to consumers with high involvement. A small and simple recommendation (an online consumer review with low quality) can affect the consumers attitude under both high-involvement- and low-involvement conditions (Lee et al., 2008, p. 349).

2.8. Collaborative economy

The collaborative economy has through the last years gained momentum in the tourism industry. It has opened up for new opportunities in tourism from the perspective of customers because of the new technology and mobilization (Dredge & Gyimóthy, 2015, p. 294). Examples of some well-known companies that is connected to the collaborative economy are the transport services Lyft and Uber, that is a cheaper and easier offer than the use of a taxi. There is also AirBnB, which is a hospitality company where people rent out their houses or apartments to travelers (AirBnB, 2019).

Because of all the new companies that have upraised in the collaborative economy, it has created some challenges for those companies that goes under the traditional tourism industry (Dredge & Gyimóthy, 2015, p. 294). Even though some consumers might look at these offers like AirBnB as incredible and cheap compared to other offers, it makes it more difficult for hotels to gain

customers. Lyft and Uber are two companies that takes customers from taxi-companies and other public transportations.

Trust and visitor satisfaction can be reduced when it comes to the traditional tourism industrial system because of the distorted information and the high transaction costs between the market actors. When it comes to collaborative economy in the tourism industry, there are many services that use a tool called peer-to-peer feedback. Peer-to-peer feedback is a tool where both the consumers and suppliers get rated. This tool can build up trust because of the authentic host-visitor relations that is not easy to achieve in the traditional tourism systems (Dredge & Gyimóthy, 2015, p. 294).

2.9. Managing electronic word-of-mouth

As earlier mentioned, electronic word-of-mouth makes it possible for people to share their knowledge, experiences, thoughts and more online with other people worldwide (Minazzi, 2015, p. 22). Since people are sharing both positive and negative experiences, it is important for companies to be able to manage the electronic word-of-mouth about their company. Therefore has word-of-mouth management been integrated in marketing strategy (van der Lans et al., 2010, p. 349).

Word-of-mouth marketing, also called WOMM, is described as the intentional influence of communication between consumers, where commercial information gets transformed into cultural stories (Kozinets, de Valck, Wojnicki & Wilner, 2010, p. 71). The goal with this type of marketing is to use the communication between customers to spread the information about a

brand, company, service or product. This information can be spread intentionally, but also unintentionally (De Bruyn and Lilien, 2008, p. 151). It is intentional word-of-mouth when the person on a social media platform is a promoter for a specific company or product (Minazzi, 2015, p. 108). One reason why word-of-mouth is getting spread by a person can be that a company is paying them. Another reason can be the need of sharing information with friends and family. Unintentional spread of word-of-mouth is when a person is spreading information for a company or brand without having an intention (Minazzi, 2015, p. 108). An example on this can be to follow an account on Instagram and liking its posts.

Minazzi (2015, p. 109) explain different actions through social media marketing to be able to manage electronic word-of-mouth. The first action in this table is “Pursue the objective of customer satisfaction in order to incentive spontaneous positive word-of-mouth in all the steps of consumer behaviour”. It is because customer satisfaction is an important driver in order to generate positive word-of-mouth (Minazzi, 2015, p. 109), and it is important that customers are not going home unsatisfied. Companies need to focus on how they can prevent failure when it comes to service, and they should also encourage their customers to tell them if they are not satisfied with the service (He and Harris, 2014, p. 147). Secondly it is “Social media planning: decide the social media mix and the social media approach”. The meaning with this action is that a company need to decide which social media platform to use and how to develop (Minazzi, 2015, p. 109). It is important that the company is aware of that not every social media platform is equally effective (De Bruyn and Lilien, 2008, p. 151).

Third in this table is “Identify influencers/opinion leaders for each social medium”. Influencers are playing a key role when it comes to online environment, and therefore it is important that companies are identifying a small group of influencers and communicates with them. Opinion leaders/influencers have often more credibility when it comes to customers, and some might think of them as having more expertise in the field. They may also create more interest and engagement among customers (Minazzi, 2015, pp. 109-110). Fourth is “Create engaging and accessible content for customers and prospects”. People likes to talk with their friends and other about topics that they find interesting (Sernovitz, 2006), and it has been proved that emotional content that a company share has more influence and are more likely to be more effective spread (Bruni, Francalanci & Giacomazzi, 2012, p. 287).

Fifth we find “Promote interactions and sharing”. Many of the social media platforms we have today have some specific function as like, comment and share. This makes people interact in each other’s daily life online. As long as you are connected to the Internet you can keep in touch with your friends and family while traveling, and some people after having an experience they chose to write a review online on TripAdvisor. Then they are contributing to spread electronic word-of-mouth, positive and negative, on the basis of its emotions (Minazzi, 2015, pp. 110-111). Sixth is “Promptly reply to all social media users’ questions by means of a multiple customer support service (Social Media Customer Care-SMCC)”. It is expected for customers that companies on social media are obtaining answers to the questions they are given. They need to keep in touch with their customers by newsletters, e-mails and more (Minazzi, 2015, p. 111). In cases where the employees have not been getting proper training, the customer engagement can be affected negatively. Therefore, it is important that employees, especially the employees that is

directly in contact with customers, are getting the proper training that they need in order to achieve engagement from their customers (Ramaswamy, 2009, p. 33).

Seventh in the table we find “Call social media users to action”. When it comes to engaging users on social media it can be difficult to create specific events that are interesting or promotions where the users get asked to collaborate. It is important that the company are aware for that their marketing actions are properly studied, not just improvised. In cases where the company have created a contest with an award for the winner, it is important that they provide their audience with rules that are both specific and clear, and that there are not misunderstanding. All promotion should lead to conversations both online and in peoples’ social daily life (Minazzi, 2015, p. 111). Last in the table we find “Engage in conversations of third-party websites”. This means that companies should try to engage communication and conversations about their product or services on third party websites that are used by consumers. The first thing that the company should do is to research for their reputation online in order to gain knowledge. Secondly, they should monitor the planned website for continuing the conversation. An example on this can be that a company replies to online reviews made by costumers on TripAdvisor (Minazzi, 2015, p. 111).

2.10. Challenges and opportunities

When it comes to purchasing a product online, it can be difficult for the customer to make the decision about if the product is worth it or not. A person that post a review online often provide similar information as a seller, but this information is more consumer-oriented than product-oriented (Lee et al., 2008, p. 342).

The Internet has created opportunities when it comes to the communication of electronic word-of-mouth, but also challenges (Litvin et al., 2008, p. 462). People are not only getting information about goods and services from those people that they know, but also from other people all over the world with experience and knowledge about products or services (Jalivand et al., 2011, p. 45).

As mentioned earlier in this paper, electronic word-of-mouth has made it easier for people to get access to wanted information, as well as exchanging information with others, because of the cost is low. The technology has made it easier for us to get greater control over communication types. Even though this is a good opportunity, there has occurred challenges because of the possibility to be anonymous (Dellarocas, 2003, p. 1410). On many different platforms and websites, people have the opportunity to write reviews that they can publish anonymously. Since people do not have to show their real identity online, some might misuse it by publishing fake reviews to make a negative impact on a product, brand or company. Also, companies, friends or family can write a fake review in order to make the conversation about a product or the company more positive than it would have been experienced by a random customer.

Another challenge is manipulating of search results online. According to Tatum (2005, pp. 2-3), there is something called “Google bombing” where Google users takes advantage of Google’s algorithm in order to manipulate the search results. Electronic word-of-mouth has become a tool that these “Google bombers” can use in order to manipulate the structure of the web space. In different from word-of-mouth, electronic word-of-mouth is able to create virtual communities

and relationships. Through this, the readers get influenced during their information searches online (Litvin et al., 2008, p. 462).

When it comes to the hospitality industry and the tourism industry, many people think that online reviews are an opportunity for the travel supplier, not a challenge (Litvin et al., 2008, p. 462).

This opportunity has also become a marketing tool that have opened up for more communication and sharing information with a larger scale of people (Dellarocas, 2003, p. 1410). Chen and Xie (2005, p. 219) have stated that companies should supply responding reviews by customers into their marketing strategy. It has also been confirmed that if hotels respond to its negative reviews, their customers attitude can be influenced positively, as well as the perceptions of new potential customers (Litvin & Hoffman, 2012, p. 139). TripAdvisor gave hotels the possibility to answer their reviews after they got requested by the hoteliers. Since it was the hotels that was heavily requesting this, it should have been many hotels that used their opportunity, but it has been found that there are actually few hotels that respond to their costumers' reviews online (O'Connor, 2010, p. 768).

2.11. Hypothesis

After doing the literature review, I have made five hypothesis that are connected with the research question: "How does electronic word-of-mouth affect the hotel industry?". These hypotheses will be confirmed or denied after the analysis of the collected data from the survey.

H1: Young people are more likely to be affected by online reviews.

The reason behind this hypothesis is that young people have grown up with technology and social media. They have their smartphone available to use internet and get in contact with friends and family at any time. Because of the development of technology and Web 2.0, I believe that younger people are more likely to be affected by electronic word-of-mouth as online reviews than elderly people. In the earlier days, people had to talk to each other, consult with travel agents, or search for information in travel guide books. Young people today are used to have all the information they want and need available online by using their phone or computer. They do not have to do any effort in order to get information or advices.

H2: People who goes on business travel tends to stay at hotels more often than people who goes on leisure travel.

I believe that people that tend to have the most stays at hotels within a year are those with the purpose of business travel. When employees are going on a business trip, I do not think they are putting as much effort to evaluate the quality or the atmosphere of the hotel at online websites or platforms as people going on leisure travel. I think that people going on business trips either have other people booking a stay for them through the company or that they are mainly focusing on the location of the hotel in relation to the workplace. Therefore, I do not believe that travellers with the purpose of business are getting as affected by electronic word-of-mouth as those with the purpose of leisure. I do also believe that they are not caring to much about writing a positive review after having a good experience at their stay, or that they write a negative review if they were not as satisfied.

H3: Negative reviews affect people's attitude and behaviour towards hotels more than positive reviews.

Several of the authors of the articles used in the literature review have confirmed that people are paying more attention to negative reviews than positive reviews. This is because negative reviews give people the impression that there is a lack of confidence in the product, which can affect the sale of the product (Cui et al., 2012, p. 45). As a tourist, in order for me to write a positive review online, my experience should be extraordinary. For me it is more likely that I would use time to write a negative review after having an unsatisfying stay at a hotel. Also, if I read a negative review online, I must at least read five positive reviews in order to change my attitude towards the hotel to be positive or neutral. Therefore, I thought it would be interesting to see how the results from the survey will be compared to earlier studies. Do the respondents feel that they are getting more affected by the negative reviews they find online than the positive reviews, or do they not care that much when the information comes from a person that they do not have any relationship to?

H4: People do not find anonymous reviews trustworthy.

Anonymity is a challenge that has occurred in electronic word-of-mouth. One of the reasons why this can be a challenge is because it can be misleading and it is easy to be taken out of context (Dellarocas, 2003, p. 1410). As people do not know this person that put out the information through writing reviews, and the account is not connected to a profile, I believe that people do not care as much for these types of reviews. People do not know the motive behind the review. For example, a positive review can be written by somebody that is connected to the company, or

if it is a negative review, it may have been written by a competitor or a person related to the competitors.

H5: People search for advices about services online rather than asking their friends and family.

Since Web 2.0 have made it easier for people to interact and exchange knowledge compared to earlier (Knights, 2007, p. 31), I believe that people use the Internet in order to get advices more than they turn to their friends and family. The reason behind this hypothesis is because there is so much information today that is available online. Most of the information that you are interested in will probably be available online from several information sources. Therefore, I believe that people find it easier to just search online for getting advices than physically go and ask friends and family. Also, your acquaintance may not have any knowledge or experience related to the product or service that you are considering. Web 2.0 have made it possible for us people to find the information we want and need most of the time by finding information shared by others with more knowledge and experience about the specific product or service.

3.Method

Social science contributes to gain knowledge about reality. Johannessen, Christoffersen & Tufte (2011, p. 33) explains that the use of a method means to work towards a goal by following a particular path. The word method comes from the Greek word *methodos*, and that were it got its meaning. Social science method is about how we gain information about the social reality, and how we analysis this information. It is also about social conditions and processes. This type of method is about collecting, analyse and interpret data, which Is a central part of empirical research (Johannessen et al., 2011, p. 33).

3.1. Design

3.1.1. Descriptive research

The research question for this paper is “How electronic word-of-mouth affect the hotel industry?”. There have been studied different topics about electronic word-of-mouth, so the topic for this research is not something new. Through this paper I want to find out specific how electronic word-of-mouth is affecting the hotel industry. Therefore is this a descriptive research. By using a descriptive research method, the goal is to present a picture of an activity, event or a group. This type of research is focusing on questions that starts with “how” and “who”. Many social researches are descriptive, and so are a lot of the social research that are in scholarly journals or are used to make political decision (Neuman, 2014, p. 15).

3.1.2. Quantitative method

An example on a quantitative approach are surveys. In this type of surveys there is a focus on counting phenomena. Many of the procedures in a quantitative approach are retrieved from scientific method, but are adapted to the fact that what is being studied are humans and human phenomena (Johannessen, Christoffersen & Tufte, 2011, pp. 35-36). Usually quantitative data are collected by using questionnaires with fixed questions and given answer options. After the data is collected, it is time to analyse. Quantitative data analysis takes place by means of counting, where different techniques of static are used. When it comes to the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative, an essential part of social research consists of interpreting data (Johannessen et al., 2011, p. 37).

3.2. Research question and hypotheses

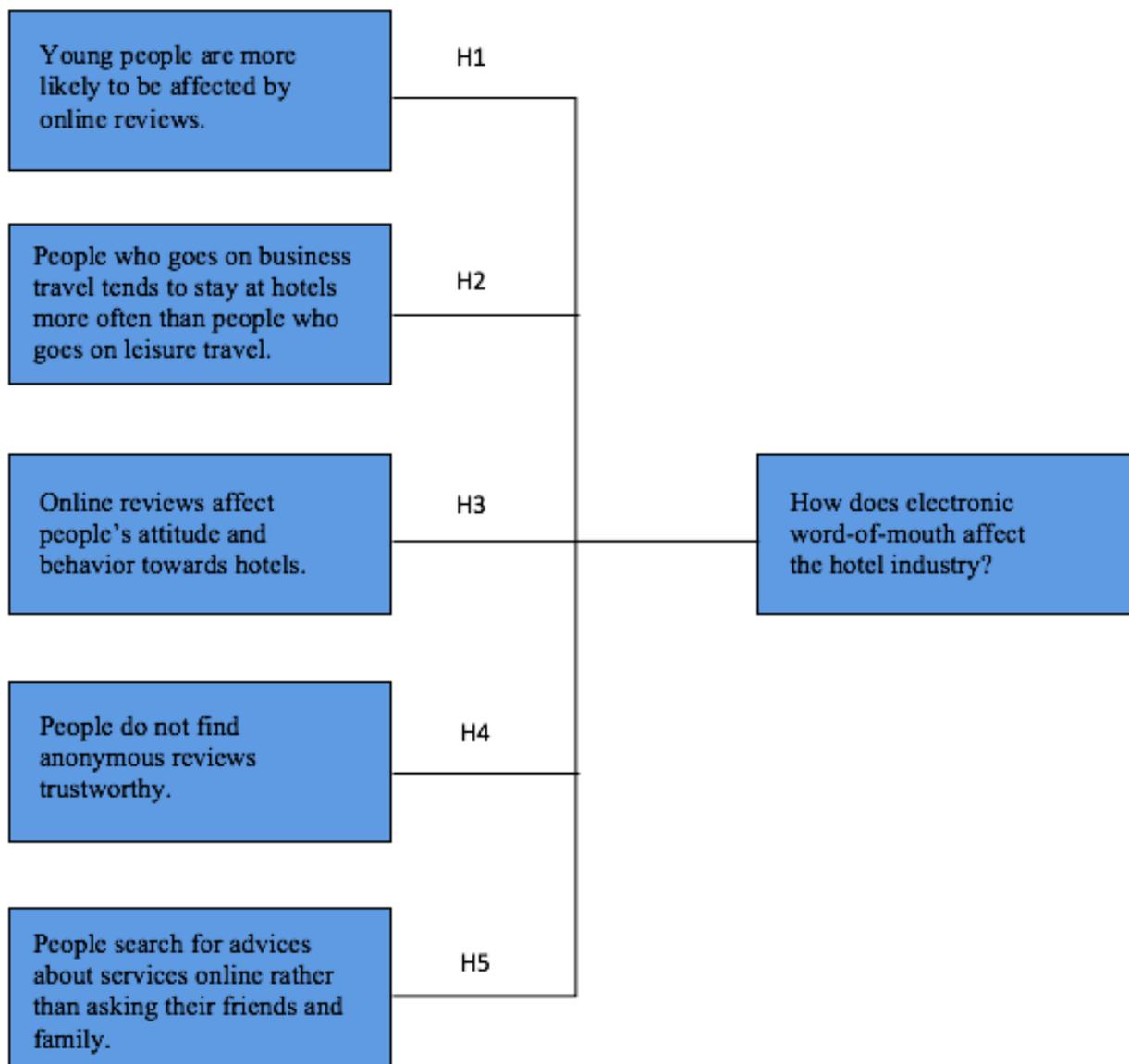


Figure 1-Hypotheses

3.3. Sampling

Since the chosen method is quantitative, the sampling takes a lot of effort. The definition of sample is a small group of people taken from a large group of people (Neuman, 2014, p. 96).

3.2.1. Snowball sampling

In order to reach out to a large group of people, I decided to use my network on the social media platform Facebook. The goal of using snowball sampling is to get into a network that is already existing. The process starts with a small group and then it is spreading out to a larger group of people. It is defined as a non-random sample where the selection is based on a network that is pre-existing (Neuman, 2014, p. 99). Since I would like to reach out to people outside of Norway as well, this method can help me if people continue to share the survey with their friends.

A crucial feature with snowball sampling is that every person has a connection with the others, and it can either be a direct or an indirect connection. The members on Facebook do not have to directly know the other or interact with them, but they are all part of a linked web (Neuman, 2014, p. 99).

3.3. Data collection

Before starting to collect data, it is important to know the target for the study. In this research it is travellers that have had a hotel stay. I want to find out what they do before purchasing a trip, and where they seek information. Are they asking their friends and family for advices, or are they searching on different platforms online before they make the decision of purchasing a trip, especially before booking a stay at a hotel. For this research it is interesting to look at the country of residence of the respondents, their gender, age, marital status, education, and employment status. One important factor that should be included in the survey is the respondents travel patterns. It is interesting to know how often or how seldom people are travelling during a year,

and what kind of travels they go on. The answers will most likely be different for a respondent that goes on business trips, compared to a person that goes on weekend trips on its leisure time.

3.3.1. Survey

By using fixed questions and alternative answers it makes it possible to look at similarities and variations in the way the respondent answers the questions (Johannessen et al., 2011, p. 277). Neuman (2014, p. 13) state that by using specific questions or topics for collecting data, some techniques will be more effective. It is important for the researcher to not be locked into using one technique if it is not effective to use. For a researcher it is also important to be aware of the strengths and limitations for the chosen techniques. One of the quantitative data collection techniques is survey. By using this type of research, people get to answer a written questionnaire. From the results of the survey, we get a picture of peoples' thoughts or what they do. It is normal to use a smaller group of selected people, and if it is properly conducted, the results can be generalized to a group that is larger (Neuman, 2014, p.13).

3.3.2. Electronic survey

The type of electronic survey used in this study is Web-based survey. This is a relatively easy way to set up a survey and it is not so complicated to administer. If the website has many visitors every day, it should be easy to gain responses. For websites with low traffic, it takes more effort to gain respondent. It can be necessary to invite respondent to participate in the survey by sharing a link to the website. In order for people to actually participate, it is important that the survey is not too long, and that most of the questions are closed-ended. By using web-based survey, there are some advantages as you can get fast response, and it is to a low cost. It also

makes it easier to get a wide audience, and with the use of appropriate software, web survey gives the ability to almost instantaneously process and disseminate the results. It is relatively easy to design and create this type of survey thanks to the development of software. A challenge with the use of Web-based survey is whether the respondents complete it or not (Williamson, 2002, p. 105).

I decided that I wanted to post the survey on the social media platform Facebook because I have a big network of people there with nationalities from all over the world. I decided that this was the best way for my survey to reach out to a large group of people with different nationality, age, education, preferences and experiences. Since I previous in my education have had a semester abroad, I have collected an international network.

Facebook is a social media platform that was founded in 2004. The platform's mission is to give people the opportunity to build community, and they want to bring the world closer together. It gets used by people to stay connected to their friends and family, as well as discover the happenings in the world, and share experiences that is important for them. As of March 31, 2019, they had approximately 37 700 full-time employees. Facebook have around 1.56 billion active users every day, and 2.38 billion active users monthly (March 31, 2019) (Facebook, 2019).

3.4. Planned sample

3.4.1. Respondents

The target group or wanted respondents for this study were all people that have had at least one stay at a hotel. It was because they must have stayed in a hotel in order to answer the questions in the survey. I was interested in getting answers from people who either write reviews online, post reviews online or do both. The most important was that the wanted respondents are engaging in electronic word-of-mouth.

I also thought it would important that there was a wide range difference in the age of the respondents in order to see how their different habits of searching and gaining information before purchasing a stay at a hotel, and their preferences. It would also be interesting to see if people from different countries have different preferences. In order to reach out to all these different people, I used my network to try engaging people to share the surveys further. Then I would have the chance to reach out to not only my own network on Facebook, but also some of my friends' networks. My goal was to reach 300 respondents in order to get valid results.

3.5. Preparing the questionnaire

I used the question type closed in my survey. It is involving offering the respondents a number of defined response choices where they chose the answer that suits them the most. For example, they chose between male or female, but it can also involve a range of different choices as single, in a relationship, married or domestic partnership, separated. It is normally easy to convert closed questions into SPSS (Pallant, 2005, pp. 7-8).

Question 9-18 and 20-24 have a wide range choice of responses from never to always. This includes five different alternative answers: never, seldom, sometimes, often, and always. I also included a few open-ended questions where I asked for “others” and “any comments”.

3.6. Execution of the survey

After preparing the questions for the survey, I had to choose a website for the execution of the survey. I used SurveyXact in order to collect data for my research. After the survey were completed, I sent the link out to around 20 persons that are my friends and family. I did it in order to get feedback about the structure and the questions, to develop it to be better and more understandable, before publishing it on Facebook and sending it to positional respondent.

After the test round and changing some parts of the survey, I published it on Facebook. I explained the content of the survey, and kindly asked them to share it with their Facebook network. I also published it on a Facebook group from my days on semester abroad. The survey was published on the 25th of April and ended on the 25th of April. My Facebook-post got shared 43 times, thanks to my network there. There were 321 respondents that participated in the survey.

3.7. Reliability and validity

The meaning of reliability is that a measurement does not differ because of the characteristics of how you have measured or the measurement instrument. Reliability measurement are easy to see in physical, and they the method is consistent and dependable (Neuman, 2014, p. 132).

Validity is defined as a feature of measures where the concept of interest is matching the used method for measuring. It addresses how the aspect of reality measured fits to the ideas used to understand the reality aspect. Many people know the term validity as “correct” or “true”, but there are existing many different kinds of validity. When we use measurement validity, it means the fit between operational and conceptual definitions, which means that the better the fit is, the greater the validity is. If a measure is valid for one purpose, it does not mean that it is valid for other purposes.

3.8. Data analyses & Results

In order to analyse the collected data from the survey, I used the data program SPSS Statistics. I used the Descriptive Statistics Frequencies to get an overview over the results from the survey. I had to put each of the variables in order to see the results from the participants.

After transferring the collected data into the program SPSS, the analyses showed that of the 321 respondents, 238 of them were females and 83 of them were males. This means that 74,1% of the total amount of respondents were females and 25,9% were males (Appendix B1). The analyses show that the youngest respondent was 18 years old, and the oldest was 78 years old. This shows us that it was a wide range of ages on the respondent, with 60 years different from the youngest to the oldest respondent (Appendix B2). By making an analysis of descriptive statistics, we can see on the results that both the youngest male and female respondent were 18 years old. Of the respondents, the oldest male was 78 years old, and the oldest female was 76 years old.

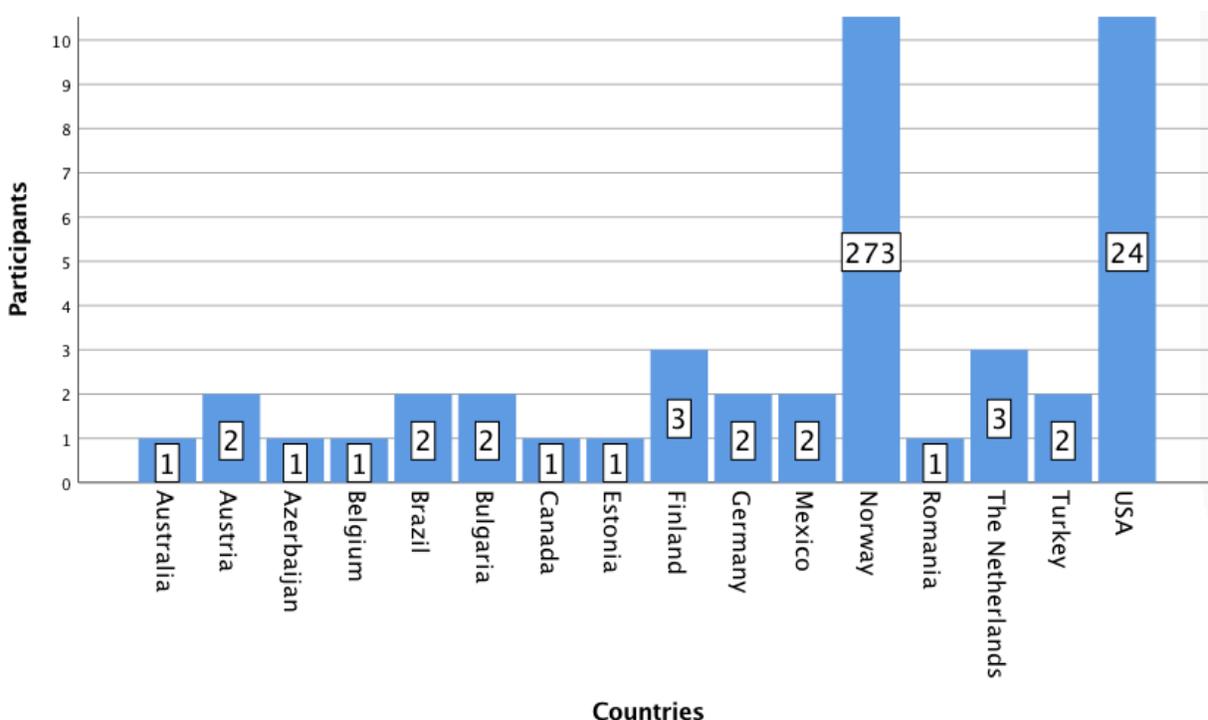


Figure 2: Country of residence

Data show that the 321 respondents were from 16 different countries. The majority of respondents were from Norway with the total of 273 out of 321 respondents, which means 85,0% of the total. From USA it was 24 respondents, 3 from Finland and the Netherlands, 2 from Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Germany, Mexico and Turkey, and 1 respondent from Australia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Canada, Estonia and Romania (Appendix B3).

There were 138 of the respondents (43,0%) that were married or in a domestic partnership, which is the majority of the respondents. 90 respondents (28,0%) were single, 90 respondents (28,0%) were in a relationship, and 3 of the respondents (0,9%) were separated (Appendix B4). Most of the respondent had College/University as the highest level of education (213 respondents, 66,4%). Following had 62 respondents (19,3%) high school, 28 respondents (8,7%) vocational training, and 7 respondents (2,2%) primary school as their highest education level.

There were 11 respondents (3,4%) that answered others. The answers they gave were PhD, post graduate degree, masters and bachelor (Appendix B5).

Out of the 321 respondents, 205 respondents (63,9%) were employed, 12 respondents (3,7%) self-employed, 5 respondents (1,6%) unemployed, 68 respondents (21,2%) students, 27 respondents (8,4%) retired, and 4 respondents (1,2%) answered others. Those respondents that answered this wrote that they were both student and employed (Appendix B6).

The results from the question “How often do you stay in hotels within a year?” shows that the majority of the respondent stay in hotels 1-3 times within a year. It was 158 respondents that were answering this, which is 49,2% of the total (Appendix B7). Out of these respondent, 30 respondents were males and 128 respondents were females. 81 respondents (25,2%) answered that they stay in hotels 4-6 times within a year. There were only 9 respondents (2,8%) that answered that they have none hotels stay within a year, and 25 respondents (7,8%) answered that they stay in a hotel more than 12 times within a year. 18 out of the 25 respondents (72,0%) that had more then 12 stays at a hotel within a year were females (Appendix B36).

The majority of the respondents answered that the purpose of their stay at the hotel were leisure travel, with 235 respondents (73,4 %) of the total. There were 62 respondents (19,3%) that travelled because of business, and 23 respondents (7,2%) had other purposes for their stay at the hotel. Most of these respondents wrote that they stayed in hotels because of competitions, brass

band events, and sports event (Appendix B8).

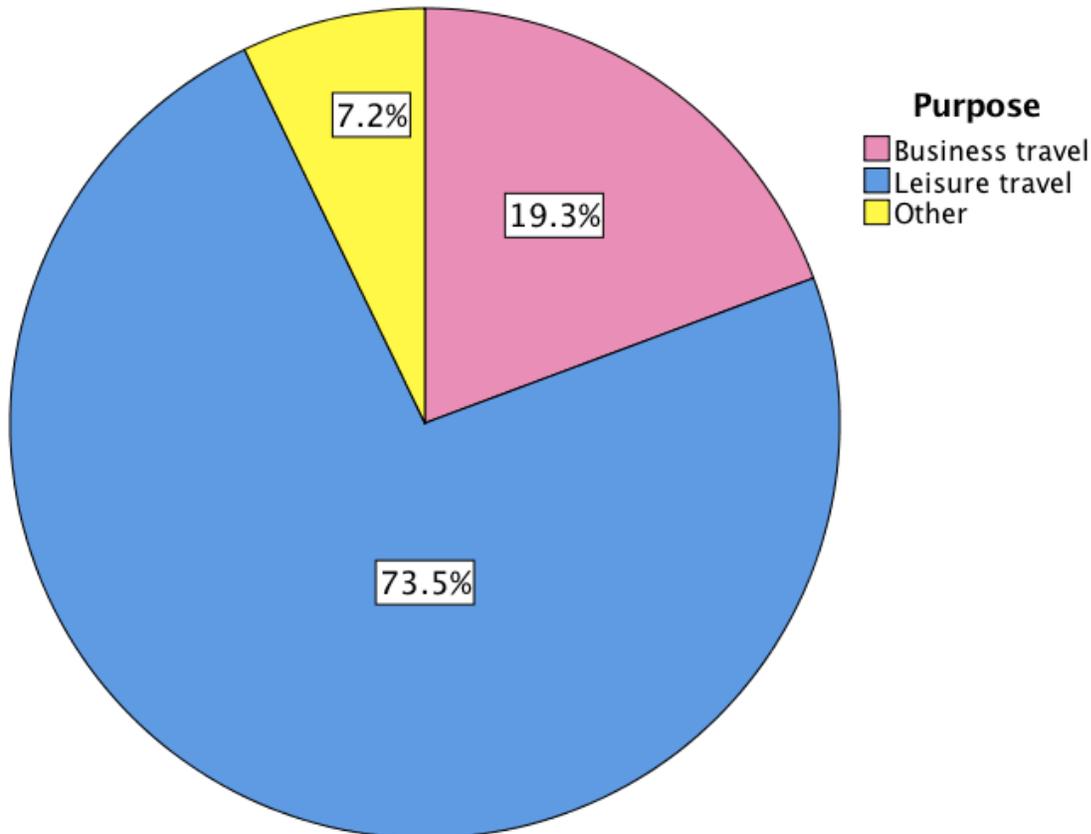


Figure 3: Purpose with the stay at the hotel

The results from the survey show us that 135 out of the 158 respondents that have a hotel stay 1-3 times within a year have leisure travel as their purpose. Most of the people that answered that they stayed at hotels 4-5 times and 7-9 times within a year also had the purpose of leisure travel. The respondents that stayed in hotels more than 10 times within a year were people with the purpose of business travel. The results showed that 12 out of the 25 respondent that had more than 12 hotels stay within a year travelled for business (Appendix B35).

Before purchasing a trip, the results show that most of the respondents talk to their friends and family to get advice sometimes (140 respondents, 43,6%). There were few people, only 13 respondents (4,0%), that responded that they always talk to their friends and family in order to get advice before they purchase a trip (Appendix B9). Most of the respondents, 113 respondents (35,2%) search for reviews online in order to get information about others' experiences before they purchase a trip. Many also answered that they often or sometimes search for reviews, but only 9 respondents (2,8%) answered that they never search for reviews before they pay for a trip (Appendix B10). When it comes to getting affected by the review they find online, most of the respondents, 167 respondents (52,0%), answered that they often get affected. Only 5 respondents (1,6%) means that they never get affected by reviews (Appendix B11). The majority of 160 out of 321 respondents (49,8%) responded that they sometimes trust the information that reviewers write online even though they do not know this person. Few respondents answered that they never or always trust the reviewer (Appendix B12). The results show that people are a little more sceptical if the review is made anonymous. There were 22 respondents (6,9%) that never trust anonymous reviews, which is 4,7% more than if they do not know the reviewer. Most of the respondents, 153 respondents (47,7%) answered that they sometimes trust the reviewer even if it is made anonymous, but it was 7 people less than when it is not anonymous (Appendix B13).

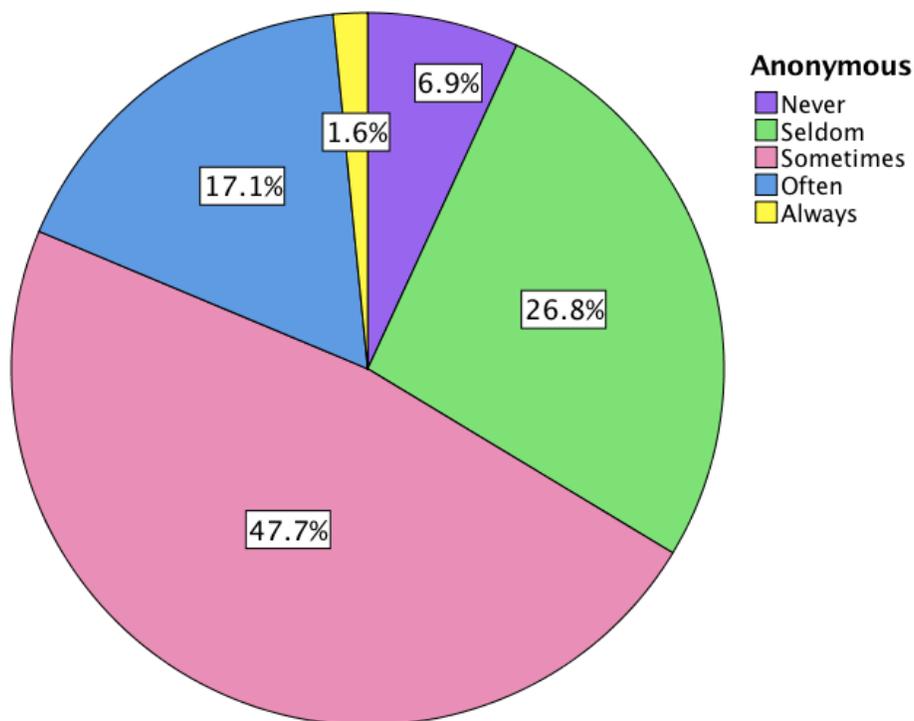


Figure 4: If the participants trust anonymous reviewers

In order to analyse the relationship between two variables, I used the Descriptive Statistic Crosstabs. I divided the age into three different groups. Group 1 is age 18-37, group 2 is age 38-57, and group 3 is age 58-78. I decided to focus on the answers newer and always. First, I used it to see the relationship between age and if the respondents talk to friends and family to get advices before purchasing a trip. According to the respondents in the survey, those in the age group 58-78 (25,0%) turn at least to their friends and family in order to get advices. Those respondents that seek for advices through friends and family are those in the age of 18-37 (6,1%). When it comes to searching for reviews online before the purchase, the outcome was similar to the friends and family question. It was those in age 58-78 that answered never the most (8,3%). Also, those that actually search for reviews before purchasing a trip were those in the age of 18-37 (44,1%). The group of age 58-78 had 12,5% respondents that said they never get

affected by the reviews they find online, while the group of age 18-37 had 19,0% of the respondents that said they always get affected by the online reviews they read online. There was most responds in age 58-78 that said they never trust the reviewer's opinion even though they do not know them. 5,0% of age 18-37 responded that they always trust the reviews even though they do not know the reviewer. There was 12,5% of the respondents in the age of 58-78 that never trust the reviews with anonymous reviewer, while there were only respondents from the age 18-37 that answered that they always trust reviews that are made anonymous. It was 2,8% of the respondents that always trust the reviews, but both age group 38-57 and age group 58-78 had no respondents that would trust an anonymous reviewer.

		FriendFam	Search	Affected	Trust	Anonymous
Age 18-37	Never	8.4%	3.4%	1.1%	1.1%	5.0%
	Always	6.1%	44.1%	19.0%	5.0%	2.8%
Age 38-57	Never	8.5%	0.8%	0.0%	1.7%	8.5%
	Always	1.7%	25.4%	6.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Age 58-78	Never	25.0%	8.3%	12.5%	12.5%	12.5%
	Always	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 1-Age groups compared to different variables about advice seeking and trust

Before purchasing a stay at a hotel online, most of the respondents, 123 respondents (38,3%) visit the homepage of the hotel. There were also 101 respondents (31,5%) that often visit the homepage, and only 4 respondents (1,2%) never visit the hotel's website before purchasing their stay (Appendix B14). The majority of 110 respondents often read information about the hotel on TripAdvisor, while 17 respondents (5,3%) never visit TripAdvisor to gain information (Appendix B15). Most of the respondents, 99 respondents (30,8%) seldom use Facebook in order to find information about hotels, followed by the answers never and sometime. Only 19 respondents (5,9%) always visit the hotel's page on Facebook (Appendix B16). When it comes

to the social media platform Instagram, only 4 respondents (1,2%) use it to gain information about the hotel. There were 185 respondents (57,6%) that never use this platform before purchasing a stay at a hotel online (Appendix B17). The social media platform that was the least popular to use in order to get information about a hotel was Twitter. Out of the 321 respondents, there was only 1 respondent (0,3%) that used Twitter before purchasing a stay at a hotel, while 292 respondents (91,0%) never use this platform to search for information (Appendix B18). Other websites than mentioned in the survey that some of the respondents' use are Expedia, Booking.com, Google, Hotwire.com, Hotels.com, Hostelworld.com, YouTube and Trivago. Some respondents also wrote that they use travel agencies (Appendix B19).

I used Crosstabs to see the relationship between the age of the respondents and the different online platforms mentioned in the survey: homepage, TripAdvisor, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The table below show that from group 1 there was 1,7% that never visit a hotel's homepage before purchasing a stay online, and 39,7% that always visit the homepage before the purchase. There was no one from group 2 that answered never, and 39,0% that always visit the homepage. From group 3 there was 4,2% that never visit the homepage of the hotel before purchasing a stay, and 25,0% that always visit the homepage. The answers from the survey show that the age group that use homepages as an information source before purchasing a stay at a hotel is those between year 18 and 37. Those people between age 38 and 57 are those that uses homepages before the purchase at least. It is the same outcome when it comes to use TripAdvisor as an information source before the purchase. Age 18-37 are those that use TripAdvisor the most (21,2%), and age 58-78 use it the least (25,0%). When it comes to visit the hotel's page on Facebook before the purchase, age 58-78 had the highest result on both never and always. The

respondents in age 18-37 use Instagram the most in order to search for information before the purchase. It was only 3,9% of them that answered always, but it was more than the two other age groups. Twitter is shown to not be as popular among the respondents. The majority of all the respondents never used this social media platform to gain information about a hotel.

		Homepage	TripAdvisor	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
Age 18-37	Never	1.7%	3.9%	27.4%	57.0%	92.2%
	Always	39.7%	21.2%	6.1%	3.9%	0.6%
Age 38-57	Never	0.0%	3.4%	19.5%	55.1%	89.8%
	Always	39.0%	17.8%	5.1%	1.7%	0.0%
Age 58-78	Never	4.2%	25.0%	33.3%	79.2%	87.5%
	Always	25.0%	12.5%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 2-Age groups compared to the use of homepage and social media in order to get information.

After travelling, only a few of the respondents always, 2 respondents (0,6%), or often, 11 respondents (3,4%), write reviews online. 120 respondents (37,4%) never write reviews after their trip. Many also answered that they seldom, 98 respondents (30,5%), or sometimes, 90 respondents (28,0%), write reviews (Appendix B20).

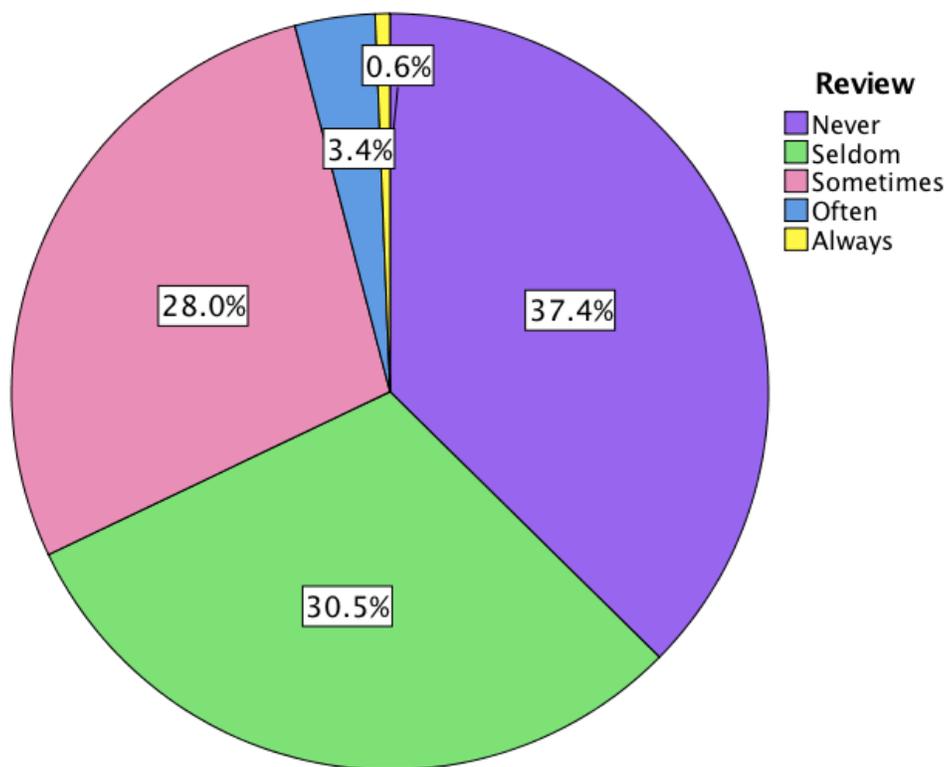


Figure 5: If the respondents write reviews online after their travel

There were 117 respondents (36,4%) that answered that they sometimes give feedback to the company after they have been travelling (Appendix B21). 103 respondents (32,1%) answered that they seldom are more likely to write a review about a negative experience. There were 90 respondents (28,0%) that answered that they sometimes are more to write a review after a negative experience, and 69 respondents (21,5%) often would be more likely to write a review if they had a negative experience (Appendix B22).

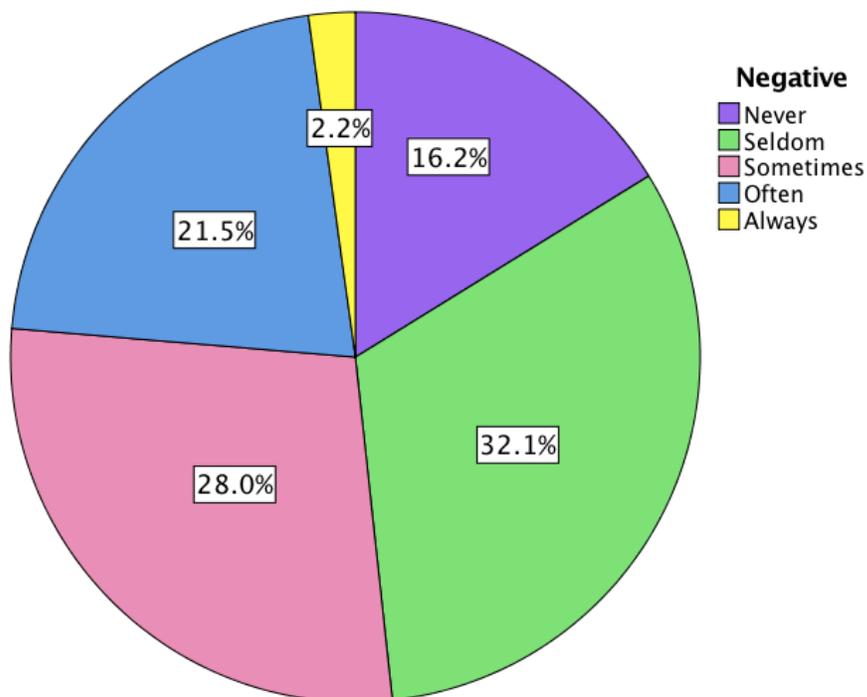


Figure 6: If the participants are more likely to write a review about a negative experience

The results show that people are more likely to write a review if they have had a positive experience. 110 respondents (34,3%) that they are sometime more likely to write a review about their positive experience. 72 respondents (22,4%) answered that they are often more likely to write if they have had a positive experience on their trip (Appendix B23). This is 0,9% more than the likeliness to write a review about a negative experience. Most respondents, 123 respondents (38,3%), responded that it is seldom important for them to share their experience with others online. Only 4 respondents (1,2%) think it is always important for them to share their experience with others online, 87 respondents (27,1%), never think this is important (Appendix B24).

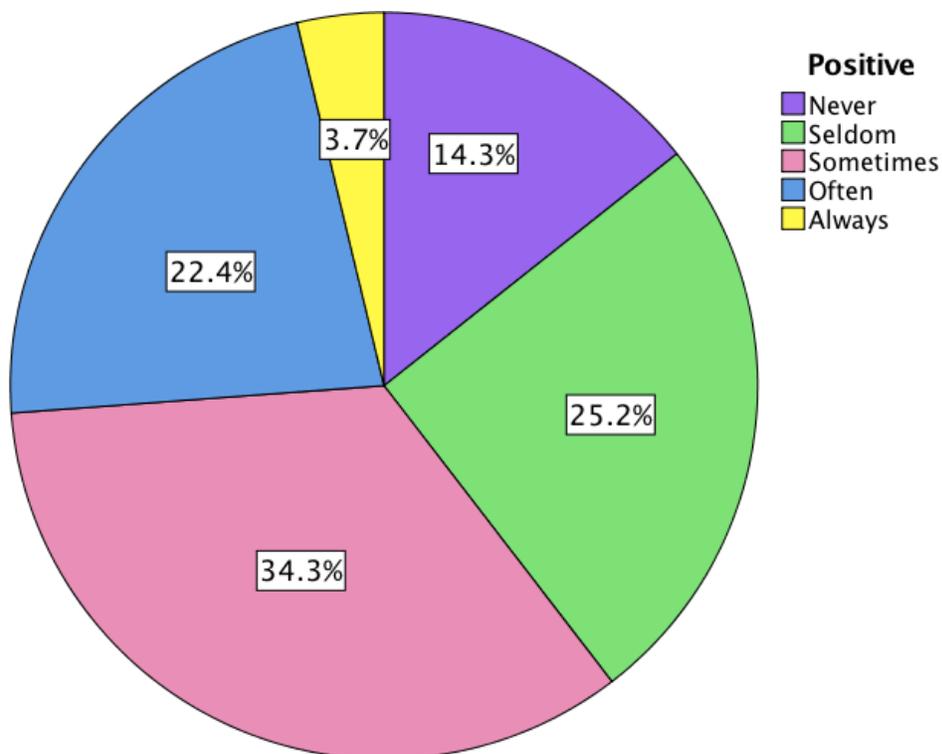


Figure 7: If the participants are more likely to write a review about a positive experience

When it comes to people's motivation for writing a review online after their travel, the majority, 90 respondents (28,0%), sometimes do it because they read reviews before the purchased their trip. There were 86 respondents (26,8%) that answered that they never do it, and 8 respondents (2,5%) are always motivated to write a review because they read review before they travelled (Appendix B25). 115 respondents (35,8%) sometimes are motivated to write reviews because they think it is important, while 92 respondents (28,7%) are often motivated and 46 respondents (14,3%) are never motivated because they think reviews online are important (Appendix B26). There were 99 respondents (30,8%) that were sometimes motivated in order to be helpful for others (Appendix B27), and 114 respondents (35,5%) that were sometimes motivated in order to be helpful for the company (Appendix B28). 107 of the respondents (33,3%) sometimes were

motivated to write reviews online because they want to share their experience with other people online (Appendix B29).

124 respondents (38,6%) answered that they are often motivated to write a positive review if they had a satisfying experience. 29 respondents (9,0%) answered that they never are motivated to write a positive review after a satisfying experience, while 59 respondents (18,4%) are always motivated to write a positive review after a satisfying experience (Appendix B30). There were similar answers to the question about being motivated to write a positive review if they want to recommend their travel to others. Most of the respondents, 120 respondents (37,4%), answered often to this question, and 36 respondents (11,2%) answered seldom and 36 respondents (11,2%) answered never (Appendix B31).

When it comes to motivation for writing a negative review after travelling, there were more respondents that answered that they would prevent other people from getting the same unpleasant experience than write because they had a bad experience. 42 respondents (13,1%) replied that they would always be motivated to write a negative review after having a bad experience, while 78 respondents (24,3%) answered often, and 110 respondents (34,3%) answered sometimes (Appendix B32). There were 63 of the respondents (19,6%) that always would be motivated to write a negative review to prevent others from having the same unpleasant experience, and 99 respondents (30,8%) often would be motivated in order to prevent the same experience as they had (Appendix B33). Only a few respondents, 4 respondents (1,2%), had always the motivation for ruin the company's reputation. Most of the respondents, 207

respondents (64,5%), never had this motivation for writing a review that were negative (Appendix B34).

4. Discussion

Electronic word-of-mouth, compared to word-of-mouth, is a more powerful tool to share information. As mentioned earlier in this paper, word-of-mouth is defined as individuals sharing information with other people (Hawkins et al., 1998, p. 238). Based on the definition of word-of-mouth, electronic word-of-mouth is defined as the informal communication that happens online, related to the use of products and services (Litvin et al., 2008, p.461), both positive and negative statements (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004, p. 39). Since the development in technology have made it easier to communicate over the world wide web, messages get sent instantly from one side of the world to the other. People do not have to send letters to each other in order to stay in contact or share information. Also, people do not have to think about the time or pay attention to the different time zones. Earlier, people turned to friends and family to get advices and help to make decision. Now a days, there are tons of information sources available online. Some sources might be more trustworthy than others. It depends on the context, and if the source is anonymous or linked to an account.

Electronic word-of-mouth have a great impact on people, whether they notice it or not. It occurs on many different platforms, as example social media like Instagram, twitter and Facebook, news channels and blogs, which a lot of people use on a daily basis. The information on social media can be shared with a small group of people, as for example Facebook friends, or a bigger group if it is a public account. Some people might share their thoughts and experience with their followers on Instagram, and others might share their experience and knowledge through writing

a review on TripAdvisor. Reviews can be written in order to give feedback to the company, or the reviewer might want other travellers to know some facts. It can be from a good experience or an unpleasant trip.

After doing literature reviews on previous studies, it is clear that people have different motives for engaging in electronic word-of-mouth. If a person has had an unpleasant experience with a company, the person might share negative information (Henning-Thurau, 2004, p. 44). It can be in order to harm the reputation of the company, or the informant might have a need to share that the experience was not okay. Another reason for why a person that have had an unpleasant experience might share it with other, can be to prevent other people from going through the same. The informant may have compassion for others, and therefore want to warn them from purchasing the same product or service. On the other hand, a person might have had a wonderful experience at a hotel, where the staff were friendly and gave an amazing service. This can be the motivation for writing a review in order to share the positive experience with the world. If there are potential customers that are considering purchasing a stay at that hotel for their travel, this positive review might give them the confident they need to make their decision. The traveller's motive can be in favour for the hotel, but it can also be in order to recommend other travellers to get the same good experience. Many travellers post pictures or videos from their trip on social media platforms, because they have a need of sharing information about their lives with their acquaintances. As human beings, we often have a need of showing others that we are living our best life, and we like the feeling when people are getting jealous.

Advice seeking is one of the most commend motives for engaging in electronic word-of-mouth (Hennig-Thurau, 2004, p. 44). As mentioned several times earlier in this paper, it is difficult to evaluate products in tourism and hospitality before the actual experience (Litvin et al., 2008, p. 458). Therefore, it is important for people to search for information online to get advices from people with more knowledge and experiences about the specific services and products. This can help their decision-making process, and it can remove some of the uncertainty around the purchase. There are many customers that are motivated to engage in electronic word-of-mouth when there is an economic reward implicated. It means that the customer will get rewarded after doing a favor for the company. An example of this can be that a hotel chain sends out a survey through e-mail to customers after they have stayed at one of their hotels. If they are participating in the survey, they are included in the draw of a free hotel weekend. Another example is that a company can publish a competition online on one of their social media platforms, where the only thing participants have to do is write a comment or share their post. This is an effective tool to spread the word, and in order to get attention from new potential customers.

Reviews are a big part of electronic word-of-mouth when it comes to the hotel industry. Through online platforms as TripAdvisor, people get the opportunity to write reviews about their experiences and their perception about different companies in the hotel and tourism industry. As mentioned above, people write reviews where they share their experiences, both positive and negative, with other people online. They can also comment on reviews made by others, if they have something they want to add. Today, companies are also allowed to respond to their customers reviews on TripAdvisor. It gives them the opportunity to interact with their customers post the experience, and it shows that companies are appreciating honest feedback. If someone

has posted a negative review about a hotel, the hotel can defend itself, and if possible, they can try to come up with a solution in order to improve the negative perception that the customer already have. They might give the customer a free stay to make up for the negative experience, or they might give a discount for their next stay. It is important that the company show that they care about their customers, and that customers feel that they are seen and heard. Reviews, as feedback directly to the company, can be an important tool for companies to improve themselves. It can also lead to development for the future. If a hotel chain or a single hotel get several negative reviews from customers, they might have to start changing their strategy into becoming a better hotel. As mentioned earlier, people get influenced by others with more experiences and knowledge than themselves (kilde). Therefore can negative reviews lead to decrease in customers for the hotel, which will lead to less income. It is important that companies knows what reputation they have online, and that they take on constructive feedback.

Through earlier studies, it has been proved that negative reviews have more effect than positive reviews (Cui, Lui, & Guo, 2012, p. 39). Both positive and negative reviews make people more aware of the quality of the product or the service that they are interested in (Fileri and McLeay, 2013, p. 53).

Even though there have been a lot of positive outcome because of electronic word-of-mouth, there have also been some challenges. As mentioned earlier, people have the opportunity to write reviews that are published anonymously. It can be difficult for readers to evaluate the information from this type of reviews because the identity is hidden. You do not know if this is a young or an elderly person, if it is a female or a male. Another problem with anonymity is that

some people can misuse it. This can be done by publishing reviews, for example, a negative review can be published in order to make a negative impact on a brand, company or product. It can be published by a competitor or a person that want to harm the reputation of the company. You cannot know if the review is written and published in order to give feedback to the company or if the reviewer want to help others from getting the same negative experience. The reviewer might believe that people can get more value and better quality for their money. “Google bombing” is also a challenge in electronic word-of-mouth (Tantum, 2005, pp. 2-3). Manipulating peoples search results on google can lead to that people use other websites than they were planning to, or that they do not use the best web site to get the wanted information. Another example is that products or services that you have been searching for online shows up as advertising on different social medias as Facebook and Instagram. This is in order to make people buy the products that they have been considering. By consistently reminding people of the product they have been looking at, they can be pushed into actually purchasing it, even though they did not plan it.

Online reviews have opened up for many opportunities for both customers and companies. People have access to information about everything they possibly need to know. They can be more confident about their choices when it comes to purchasing a service or a product because of the information that people with experiences publish online. For example, if you are afraid of bad service at the hotel or that the public transportation from the hotel to the city centre is bad, you can get the answers online.

4.1. Discussion of the hypotheses

H1: Young people are more likely to be affected by online reviews.

The results from the analysis show us that it is the people from age 18 to 37 that search for information online before purchasing a trip. It was 44,1% that answered that they always search for reviews online, while 25,4% of age 38-57 and 16,7% of age 58-78 answered the same. The analysis also show that it was only 1,1% from the age group 18-37 that answered that they never get affected by the reviews they find online, and 19,0% answered that they always get affected. There was only 6,8% of the age group 38-57 answering that they always get affected by the reviews, and 0,0% of the age group 58-78. Since most of the young people have their phone available all the time, it makes sense that they use the Internet for finding information before a trip compared to older people. Young people have also been growing up with the Internet and have been using it most of their life. Older people did not have the same opportunity when they grew up and are therefore not as used to searching for information online.

H2: People who goes on business travel tends to stay at hotels more often than people who goes on leisure travel.

19,3% of the respondents answered that the purpose of their stay at a hotel were business travel. Those respondents that stay in a hotel more than 10 times within a year responded that they were going on business travel. There were 11 out of 19 respondents that stayed in a hotel 10-12 times within a year, and 12 out of 25 respondents that stayed more than 12 times in hotels within a year with the purpose of business. As mentioned earlier, these people might not care for reviews as much as people going on leisure travel. These people are often more focused on the location of

the hotel compared to their workplace, and the price of the hotel. Often companies have frame agreements with hotel-chains and do therefore not care as much for online reviews.

H3: Online reviews affect people's attitude and behaviour towards hotels.

As results from the survey, there were only 1,6% that answered that they never get affected by the reviews they find online. 6,2% of the respondents answered that they seldom get affected by the reviews, and 27,1% answered sometimes. The majority of the respondents with 52,0% answered that they often get affected by online reviews, and 13,1% always get affected. A finding from the answers on this question was that the respondents in the age of 18-37 are those that are most affected by the information in online reviews. This agree with information from Vermeulen and Seegers (2009, p. 123) used in the literature review.

H4: People do not find anonymous reviews trustworthy.

Out of all the respondents, there were 6,9% of the respondents that answered that they never trust anonymous reviews. 26,8% responded that they seldom trust reviews that are made anonymous, while most of the respondents (47,7%) sometimes trust those reviews. There were 17,1% that often trust the information in anonymous reviews, and only 1,6% answered that they are always trusting these reviews. The analysis show that those respondents in the age of 58-78 are most sceptical to anonymous reviews. There were 12,5% that never trust these reviews, and nobody in this age group responded that they always trust anonymous reviews. This result actually surprised me, because after reading the articles in the literature review, I would believe that more people would have been sceptical to anonymous reviews than my results showed. The reason behind this is my own experiences and attitude towards reviews published by anonymous people.

I did not think that almost half of the respondents would sometimes believe in this type of reviews.

H5: People search for advices about services online rather than asking their friends and family.

After analysing the collected data, I have found that people are turning to the Internet for getting advices more than ask their friends and family. Those respondents that are actually seeking advices from friends and family the most were between age 18 and 37. Only 8,4% in this age group answered that they never ask friends and family for advices, while there were 8,5% from age 38-57 and 25,0% from age 58-78 that answered the same. The collected data show that most of the respondents are searching for information online before they are purchasing a trip. Before seeing these results, I believed that more people would turn to their friends and family to get advices before a purchase. It makes sense that younger people ask people they know with more experience about advices. I would also believe that more older people that do not use the Internet as much as younger people, would turn to their family and friends to get advices before ordering a trip.

5. Limitations of the study

A limitation with the survey is that I should have had more respondents from each of the countries. As a result from the survey, the majority were from Norway (273 respondents) and 24 respondents were from USA, while the rest of the countries had between one and three respondents. In order to see if country of residence affect the answers, I should have the same number of participants from each of the countries. Another limitation is that there were more females participating in the survey than males. Since 74,1% were females, some of the results could have been different if there were the same number of participants from each gender. I could also have made age groups in the survey, instead of making all of the respondents writing their age. Since I have divided the participants into three different age groups in some parts of the analysis, I could have made it easier for myself by using age groups in the survey.

I could have included more questions about hotels. For example, I could have given the respondents some questions about AirBnB, compared to hotels. It would be interesting to see if some of them had experiences with AirBnB, if they were positive or negative. I also think it would be interesting to see if they preferred purchasing a stay through AirBnB instead of booking a room at a hotel. This question would have contributed to the participants perception of collaborative economy.

Another limitation is that I could have included more research on hotel in the literature review, since it is a big part of this study. I think those previous researches that I have used in the literature review are enough to answer the research question, but I also believe that I could have included more to strengthen this study.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to find out how hotels get affected by electronic word-of-mouth. I used previous research in order to gain more knowledge about this field and used it to make five hypotheses that will help to answer the research question, “How does electronic word-of-mouth affect the hotel industry?”. I also used the knowledge from previous research to create the survey. I believe that my collected data would have been different and more interesting if there would have been the same number of respondents from the different countries, and not 85,0% Norwegian respondents. I am not that surprised of this result because I am a Norwegian girl, with a network that consist mainly of Norwegians. I am satisfied by my chosen method for this research. I do not think that I would have gotten that many respondents if I would have used a different research method or another social media platform in order to research out to the potential respondents.

I am not surprised that “H1: Young people are more likely to be affected by online reviews” was confirmed after the analysis of collected data. There was neither any surprised that “H2: People who goes on business travel tends to stay at hotels more often than people who goes on leisure travel” was true and confirmed by the analysis. I actually believe that the result of “H3: Online reviews affect people’s attitude and behaviour towards hotels” would been higher than they wore, but it still got confirmed. The hypothesis that surprised me the most was “H4: People do not find anonymous review trustworthy”. Because of my own experiences, I believed that more people would be sceptical of the reliability of anonymous reviews. “H5: People search for advices about services online rather than asking their friends and family” were proved right by

my collected data. I would have believed that more people asked their friends and family about advices than the results showed.

I conclude with that electronic word-of-mouth affect the hotel industry by different reasons.

People are engaged in it when they listen to other people's experiences, knowledge and thoughts, or by sharing their own opinions with others. Therefore, their attitude and behaviour towards a hotel can be influenced by other opinions, whether the information is positive or negative. Online reviews have a great impact on people's attitude since most people search for information and advices on the Internet. According to my results, people visit the homepage of the hotel before they purchase a stay, more than they use the different social media platforms. According to previous research, people are more motivated to publish a negative review. The collected data from the survey showed that the respondents were more likely to publish a review after having a positive experience. People were mostly motivated to publish a positive review because of a satisfying experience or in order to recommend the service to others.

Through the analysis, one finding is that younger people are more affected about the information online about the different services. This finding is not surprisingly, because young people have been growing up with the Internet and are used to have it available at any time. They are used to have the Internet and social media as a tool in their daily life. Many young people compare to older people, have more experience with social media, and will therefore read others experiences online, and can engage in it by commenting or liking the post.

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8. Appendices

8.1. Appendix A - Survey

Hi!

My name is Kristina, and I am working on my master's thesis in International Hospitality Management at the University of Stavanger. I am doing research on how electronic word-of-mouth affect the hotel industry. Electronic word-of-mouth is defined as all informal communication online that are related to the usage of specific products and services (Litvin et al., 2008, p. 461).

Therefore I kindly ask you to answer this survey about your habits before purchasing a stay at a hotel, and after your stay at a hotel. The answers will be anonymous and it will take approximately 5 minutes to complete the survey. Thank you in advance!

1. Gender:

- (1) Male
- (2) Female

2. Age:

3. Country of residence:

4. Marital status:

- (1) Single
- (2) Married or domestic partnership
- (3) Separated
- (4) In a relationship

5. Highest level of education:

- (1) Primary school
- (2) High school
- (3) Vocational training
- (4) College/University
- (5) Other _____

6. Employment Status:

- (4) Student
- (1) Employed
- (2) Self-employed
- (3) Unemployed
- (5) Retired
- (6) Other _____

7. How often do you stay in hotels within a year?

- (5) None
- (1) 1-3 times
- (2) 4-6 times
- (3) 7-9 times
- (4) 10-12 times
- (6) More

8. What is normally the purpose with your stay at the hotel?

- (1) Business travel
- (2) Leisure travel
- (3) Other _____

Before purchasing a trip...

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
9. Do you talk to your friends and family to get advice?	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>
10. Do you search for reviews online?	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>
11. Do you get affected by the reviews you find online?	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>
12. Do you trust the reviewer's opinions even though you do not know them?	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>
13. Do you trust the reviewer even if it is made anonymous?	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

Before purchasing a stay at a hotel online...

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
14. Do you visit their homepage?	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>
15. Do you read about them on TripAdvisor?	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>
16. Do you visit their page on Facebook?	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>
17. Do you visit their profile on Instagram?	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>
18. Do you search for information on them on Twitter?	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

19. Do you use another website or social media platform than those mentioned above?

After travelling...

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
20. Do you write a review online?	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>
21. Do you give feedback to the company?	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

- | | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 22. Are you more likely to write a review about a negative experience? | (1) <input type="checkbox"/> | (2) <input type="checkbox"/> | (3) <input type="checkbox"/> | (4) <input type="checkbox"/> | (5) <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23. Are you more likely to write a review about a positive experience? | (1) <input type="checkbox"/> | (2) <input type="checkbox"/> | (3) <input type="checkbox"/> | (4) <input type="checkbox"/> | (5) <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 24. Is it important for you to share your experience with others online? | (1) <input type="checkbox"/> | (2) <input type="checkbox"/> | (3) <input type="checkbox"/> | (4) <input type="checkbox"/> | (5) <input type="checkbox"/> |

After travelling, what is motivating you to write a review online?

- | | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 25. Is it because you read reviews yourself before purchasing a trip? | (1) <input type="checkbox"/> | (2) <input type="checkbox"/> | (3) <input type="checkbox"/> | (4) <input type="checkbox"/> | (5) <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 26. Is it because you think reviews online are important? | (1) <input type="checkbox"/> | (2) <input type="checkbox"/> | (3) <input type="checkbox"/> | (4) <input type="checkbox"/> | (5) <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 27. Is it to be helpful for others? | (1) <input type="checkbox"/> | (2) <input type="checkbox"/> | (3) <input type="checkbox"/> | (4) <input type="checkbox"/> | (5) <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 28. Is it to be helpful for the company? | (1) <input type="checkbox"/> | (2) <input type="checkbox"/> | (3) <input type="checkbox"/> | (4) <input type="checkbox"/> | (5) <input type="checkbox"/> |

- | | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 29. Is it because you want to share your experience with others online? | (1) <input type="checkbox"/> | (2) <input type="checkbox"/> | (3) <input type="checkbox"/> | (4) <input type="checkbox"/> | (5) <input type="checkbox"/> |

After travelling, what is motivating you to write a positive review?

- | | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 30. Is it because you had a satisfying experience? | (1) <input type="checkbox"/> | (2) <input type="checkbox"/> | (3) <input type="checkbox"/> | (4) <input type="checkbox"/> | (5) <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 31. Is it because you want to recommend it to others? | (1) <input type="checkbox"/> | (2) <input type="checkbox"/> | (3) <input type="checkbox"/> | (4) <input type="checkbox"/> | (5) <input type="checkbox"/> |

After travelling, what is motivating you to write a negative review?

- | | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 32. Is it because you had a bad experience? | (1) <input type="checkbox"/> | (2) <input type="checkbox"/> | (3) <input type="checkbox"/> | (4) <input type="checkbox"/> | (5) <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 33. Is it because you do not want other people to have the same unpleasant experience? | (1) <input type="checkbox"/> | (2) <input type="checkbox"/> | (3) <input type="checkbox"/> | (4) <input type="checkbox"/> | (5) <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 34. Is it to ruin the reputation of the company? | (1) <input type="checkbox"/> | (2) <input type="checkbox"/> | (3) <input type="checkbox"/> | (4) <input type="checkbox"/> | (5) <input type="checkbox"/> |

35. Any comments?

Thank you for completing the survey!

8.2. Appendix B - Results from the survey

8.2.1. Appendix B1 - Gender

		Gender			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	83	25.9	25.9	25.9
	2	238	74.1	74.1	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.2. Appendix B2 - Age

		Age			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18	3	.9	.9	.9
	19	5	1.6	1.6	2.5
	20	8	2.5	2.5	5.0
	21	9	2.8	2.8	7.8
	22	14	4.4	4.4	12.1
	23	28	8.7	8.7	20.9
	24	22	6.9	6.9	27.7
	25	24	7.5	7.5	35.2
	26	7	2.2	2.2	37.4
	27	10	3.1	3.1	40.5
	28	4	1.2	1.2	41.7
	29	8	2.5	2.5	44.2
	30	6	1.9	1.9	46.1
	31	4	1.2	1.2	47.4
	32	5	1.6	1.6	48.9
	33	5	1.6	1.6	50.5
	34	6	1.9	1.9	52.3
	35	3	.9	.9	53.3
	36	6	1.9	1.9	55.1
	37	2	.6	.6	55.8
	38	5	1.6	1.6	57.3
	39	4	1.2	1.2	58.6
	40	6	1.9	1.9	60.4
	41	8	2.5	2.5	62.9
	42	9	2.8	2.8	65.7
43	10	3.1	3.1	68.8	
44	9	2.8	2.8	71.7	
45	10	3.1	3.1	74.8	

46	10	3.1	3.1	77.9
47	8	2.5	2.5	80.4
48	6	1.9	1.9	82.2
49	8	2.5	2.5	84.7
50	3	.9	.9	85.7
51	7	2.2	2.2	87.9
52	3	.9	.9	88.8
53	3	.9	.9	89.7
54	5	1.6	1.6	91.3

Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
55	1	.3	.3	91.6
56	1	.3	.3	91.9
57	2	.6	.6	92.5
58	1	.3	.3	92.8
60	1	.3	.3	93.1
61	2	.6	.6	93.8
62	1	.3	.3	94.1
66	1	.3	.3	94.4
67	1	.3	.3	94.7
68	3	.9	.9	95.6
69	1	.3	.3	96.0
70	4	1.2	1.2	97.2
71	2	.6	.6	97.8
74	2	.6	.6	98.4
75	1	.3	.3	98.8
76	3	.9	.9	99.7
78	1	.3	.3	100.0
Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.3. Appendix B3 – Country of residence

		Country			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Australia	1	.3	.3	.3
	Austria	2	.6	.6	.9
	Azerbaijan	1	.3	.3	1.2
	Belgium	1	.3	.3	1.6
	Brazil	2	.6	.6	2.2
	Bulgaria	2	.6	.6	2.8
	Canada	1	.3	.3	3.1
	Estonia	1	.3	.3	3.4
	Finland	3	.9	.9	4.4
	Germany	2	.6	.6	5.0
	Mexico	2	.6	.6	5.6
	Norway	273	85.0	85.0	90.7
	Romania	1	.3	.3	91.0
	The Netherlands	3	.9	.9	91.9
	Turkey	2	.6	.6	92.5
	USA	24	7.5	7.5	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.4. Appendix B4 – Marital status

		Marital			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	90	28.0	28.0	28.0
	2	138	43.0	43.0	71.0
	3	3	.9	.9	72.0
	4	90	28.0	28.0	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.5. Appendix B5 – Highest level of education

Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	7	2.2	2.2	2.2
	2	62	19.3	19.3	21.5
	3	28	8.7	8.7	30.2
	4	213	66.4	66.4	96.6
	5	11	3.4	3.4	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

EduO

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		312	97.2	97.2	97.2
	Bachelor	1	.3	.3	97.5
	Graduate school	1	.3	.3	97.8
	Gymnasium	1	.3	.3	98.1
	Høyere fagskoleutdanning	1	.3	.3	98.4
	Life of hard skole	1	.3	.3	98.8
	Masters	1	.3	.3	99.1
	PhD	1	.3	.3	99.4
	Videregående	2	.6	.6	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.6. Appendix B6 – Employment Status

Employment

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	205	63.9	63.9	63.9
	2	12	3.7	3.7	67.6
	3	5	1.6	1.6	69.2
	4	68	21.2	21.2	90.3
	5	27	8.4	8.4	98.8
	6	4	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

EmpO

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		317	98.8	98.8	98.8
	Employed and self employed	1	.3	.3	99.1
	Student and employed	2	.6	.6	99.7
	Working student	1	.3	.3	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.7. Appendix B7 – How often do you stay in a hotel within a year?

		Stays			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	158	49.2	49.2	49.2
	2	81	25.2	25.2	74.5
	3	29	9.0	9.0	83.5
	4	19	5.9	5.9	89.4
	5	9	2.8	2.8	92.2
	6	25	7.8	7.8	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.8. Appendix B8 – What is normally the purpose with your stay at the hotel?

Purpose

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	62	19.3	19.3	19.3
	2	236	73.5	73.5	92.8
	3	23	7.2	7.2	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

Purpo

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		301	93.8	93.8	93.8
	50:50 business/leisure	1	.3	.3	94.1
	Besøk eller ferie	1	.3	.3	94.4
	Both	3	.9	.9	95.3
	Brass banding	1	.3	.3	95.6
	Competit	1	.3	.3	96.0
	Competitions	2	.6	.6	96.6
	Hobby	1	.3	.3	96.9
	holliday	1	.3	.3	97.2
	Leisure and business	1	.3	.3	97.5
	NA	1	.3	.3	97.8
	Slapping off	1	.3	.3	98.1
	Social group meetings	1	.3	.3	98.4
	Sports competitions	1	.3	.3	98.8
	Travel	2	.6	.6	99.4
	Vacation, concerts, business.	1	.3	.3	99.7
	Vacay	1	.3	.3	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.9. Appendix B9 – Do you talk to your friends and family to get advice?

FriendFam

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	31	9.7	9.7	9.7
	2	79	24.6	24.6	34.3
	3	140	43.6	43.6	77.9
	4	58	18.1	18.1	96.0
	5	13	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.10. Appendix B10 – Do you search for reviews online?

Search

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	9	2.8	2.8	2.8
	2	21	6.5	6.5	9.3
	3	82	25.5	25.5	34.9
	4	96	29.9	29.9	64.8
	5	113	35.2	35.2	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.11. Appendix B11 – Do you get affected by the reviews you find online?

Affected

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	5	1.6	1.6	1.6
	2	20	6.2	6.2	7.8
	3	87	27.1	27.1	34.9
	4	167	52.0	52.0	86.9
	5	42	13.1	13.1	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.12. Appendix B12 – Do you trust the reviewer’s opinions even though you do not know them?

Trust

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	7	2.2	2.2	2.2
	2	25	7.8	7.8	10.0
	3	160	49.8	49.8	59.8
	4	120	37.4	37.4	97.2
	5	9	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.13. Appendix B13 – Do you trust the reviewer even if it is made anonymous?

Anonymous

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	22	6.9	6.9	6.9
	2	86	26.8	26.8	33.6
	3	153	47.7	47.7	81.3
	4	55	17.1	17.1	98.4
	5	5	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.14. Appendix B14 – Do you visit their homepage?

Homepage

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	1.2	1.2	1.2
	2	24	7.5	7.5	8.7
	3	69	21.5	21.5	30.2
	4	101	31.5	31.5	61.7
	5	123	38.3	38.3	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.15. Appendix B15 – Do you read about them on TripAdvisor?

TripAdvisor

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	17	5.3	5.3	5.3
	2	38	11.8	11.8	17.1
	3	94	29.3	29.3	46.4
	4	110	34.3	34.3	80.7
	5	62	19.3	19.3	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.16. Appendix B16 – Do you visit their page on Facebook?

Facebook

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	80	24.9	24.9	24.9
	2	99	30.8	30.8	55.8
	3	79	24.6	24.6	80.4
	4	44	13.7	13.7	94.1
	5	19	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.17. Appendix B17 – Do you visit their profile on Instagram?

Instagram

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	185	57.6	57.6	57.6
	2	74	23.1	23.1	80.7
	3	40	12.5	12.5	93.1
	4	18	5.6	5.6	98.8
	5	4	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.18. Appendix B18 – Do you search for information on them on Twitter?

Twitter

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	292	91.0	91.0	91.0
	2	20	6.2	6.2	97.2
	3	8	2.5	2.5	99.7
	5	1	.3	.3	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.19. Appendix B19 – Do you use another website or social media platform than those mentioned above?

		Another			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		66	20.6	20.6	20.6
	-	2	.6	.6	21.2
	.	1	.3	.3	21.5
	Apps	1	.3	.3	21.8
	booking.com	1	.3	.3	22.1
	Booking.com	14	4.4	4.4	26.5
	Booking.com hotels.com Google	1	.3	.3	26.8
	Booking.com, trivago, expe dia	1	.3	.3	27.1
	Bookings	1	.3	.3	27.4
	Expe dia	2	.6	.6	28.0
	Expe dia and booking. com reviews	1	.3	.3	28.3
	Expe dia, and other tour operators	1	.3	.3	28.7
	Finn	1	.3	.3	29.0
	Friendship	1	.3	.3	29.3
	Google	7	2.2	2.2	31.5
	google review	1	.3	.3	31.8
	hostelworld.com, hotels. com and booking.com	1	.3	.3	32.1
	Hotella.com	1	.3	.3	32.4
	hote ls.com	1	.3	.3	32.7
	Hotels.com	6	1.9	1.9	34.6
	Hotels.com / booking. com	1	.3	.3	34.9
	Hotels.com endomondo	1	.3	.3	35.2
	hote ls.com, booking.com	2	.6	.6	35.8
	Hotels.com, ege ncia	1	.3	.3	36.1
	Hotwire	1	.3	.3	36.4
	Hotwire.com	1	.3	.3	36.8
	Ja	1	.3	.3	37.1

Another

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Le geforeninge n. Triva go. Momondo. Hotell.com Booking.com novosol finn. no soffaktor.no hotell chsin plages (bonus points and best price) Sometimes charter trip homepage s.	1	.3	.3	37.4
Na	1	.3	.3	37.7
NA	1	.3	.3	38.0
nei	1	.3	.3	38.3
Nei	1	.3	.3	38.6
Netsite	1	.3	.3	38.9
no	14	4.4	4.4	43.3
No	152	47.4	47.4	90.7
NO	1	.3	.3	91.0
No.	1	.3	.3	91.3
Nope	1	.3	.3	91.6
Not really. Avoid paid Google search hits.	1	.3	.3	91.9
Other websites where you can purchase a stay at the hotel	1	.3	.3	92.2
popular comparing sites (for price s) - hotels.com	1	.3	.3	92.5
Read about them at page s who reviews a lot of hotels, ex. Hotels.com, Triva go, etc.	1	.3	.3	92.8
Restpass.no	1	.3	.3	93.1
Snapchat	1	.3	.3	93.5
SnapChat	1	.3	.3	93.8
Touroppe rator	1	.3	.3	94.1
travel age ncy	1	.3	.3	94.4
Travel age ncy	1	.3	.3	94.7
Trave lage ncies	1	.3	.3	95.0
triva go	2	.6	.6	95.6
Triva go	5	1.6	1.6	97.2
Triva go, expedia etc	1	.3	.3	97.5
Yes	6	1.9	1.9	99.4
Youtube	1	.3	.3	99.7

Another

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
YouTube	1	.3	.3	100.0
Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.20. Appendix B20 – Do you write a review online?

Review

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	120	37.4	37.4	37.4
	2	98	30.5	30.5	67.9
	3	90	28.0	28.0	96.0
	4	11	3.4	3.4	99.4
	5	2	.6	.6	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.21. Appendix B21 – Do you give feedback to the company?

Feedback

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	70	21.8	21.8	21.8
	2	99	30.8	30.8	52.6
	3	117	36.4	36.4	89.1
	4	34	10.6	10.6	99.7
	5	1	.3	.3	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.22. Appendix B22 – Are you more likely to write a review about a negative experience?

Negative

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	52	16.2	16.2	16.2
	2	103	32.1	32.1	48.3
	3	90	28.0	28.0	76.3
	4	69	21.5	21.5	97.8
	5	7	2.2	2.2	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.23. Appendix B23 – Are you more likely to write a review about a positive experience?

Positive

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	46	14.3	14.3	14.3
	2	81	25.2	25.2	39.6
	3	110	34.3	34.3	73.8
	4	72	22.4	22.4	96.3
	5	12	3.7	3.7	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.24. Appendix B24 – Is it important for you to share your experience with others online?

Important

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	87	27.1	27.1	27.1
	2	123	38.3	38.3	65.4
	3	84	26.2	26.2	91.6
	4	23	7.2	7.2	98.8
	5	4	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.25. Appendix B25 – Is it because you read review yourself before purchasing a trip?

Read

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	86	26.8	26.8	26.8
	2	73	22.7	22.7	49.5
	3	90	28.0	28.0	77.6
	4	64	19.9	19.9	97.5
	5	8	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.26. Appendix B26 – Is it because you think reviews online are important?

Think

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	46	14.3	14.3	14.3
	2	43	13.4	13.4	27.7
	3	115	35.8	35.8	63.6
	4	92	28.7	28.7	92.2
	5	25	7.8	7.8	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.27. Appendix B27 – Is it to be helpful for others?

HelpO

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	41	12.8	12.8	12.8
	2	28	8.7	8.7	21.5
	3	99	30.8	30.8	52.3
	4	106	33.0	33.0	85.4
	5	47	14.6	14.6	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.28. Appendix B28 – Is it to be helpful for the company?

HelpComp

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	46	14.3	14.3	14.3
	2	47	14.6	14.6	29.0
	3	114	35.5	35.5	64.5
	4	89	27.7	27.7	92.2
	5	25	7.8	7.8	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.29. Appendix B29 – Is it because you want to share your experience with others online?

Share

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	66	20.6	20.6	20.6
	2	65	20.2	20.2	40.8
	3	107	33.3	33.3	74.1
	4	64	19.9	19.9	94.1
	5	19	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.30. Appendix B30 – Is it because you had a satisfying experience?

Satisfying

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	29	9.0	9.0	9.0
	2	32	10.0	10.0	19.0
	3	77	24.0	24.0	43.0
	4	124	38.6	38.6	81.6
	5	59	18.4	18.4	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.31. Appendix B31 – Is it because you want to recommend it to others?

		Recommend			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	36	11.2	11.2	11.2
	2	36	11.2	11.2	22.4
	3	76	23.7	23.7	46.1
	4	120	37.4	37.4	83.5
	5	53	16.5	16.5	100.0
Total		321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.32. Appendix B32 – Is it because you had a bad experience?

		Bad			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	42	13.1	13.1	13.1
	2	49	15.3	15.3	28.3
	3	110	34.3	34.3	62.6
	4	78	24.3	24.3	86.9
	5	42	13.1	13.1	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.33. Appendix B33 – Is it because you do not want other people to have the same unpleasant experience?

Unpleasant

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	39	12.1	12.1	12.1
	2	34	10.6	10.6	22.7
	3	86	26.8	26.8	49.5
	4	99	30.8	30.8	80.4
	5	63	19.6	19.6	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.34. Appendix B34 – Is it ruin the reputation of the company?

Reputation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	207	64.5	64.5	64.5
	2	71	22.1	22.1	86.6
	3	33	10.3	10.3	96.9
	4	6	1.9	1.9	98.8
	5	4	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

8.2.35. Appendix B35 – Purpose vs. number of stay at a hotel within a year.

Stays * Purpose Crosstabulation

Count		Purpose			Total
		1	2	3	
Stays	1	9	135	14	158
	2	21	57	3	81
	3	9	20	0	29
	4	11	8	0	19
	5	0	6	3	9
	6	12	10	3	25
Total		62	236	23	321

8.2.36. Appendix B36 – Gender vs. number of stay at a hotel within a year.

Gender * Stays Crosstabulation

Count		Stays						Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	
Gender	1	30	28	9	8	1	7	83
	2	128	53	20	11	8	18	238
Total		158	81	29	19	9	25	321